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# BLACK SUNLIGHT

*A Log of the Arctic*







THE AUTHOR ON THE TRAIL.

# BLACK SUNLIGHT

*A Log of the Arctic*

BY  
EARL ROSSMAN

*With an Introduction by*  
VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

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TO MY FRIEND

HENRY H. BIZALLION

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED



## PREFACE

IT was an act of courage for my friend, Earl Rossman, to hand over to me the manuscript of *Black Sunlight* just when he was leaving for Alaska on the Wilkins Arctic Expedition, and to ask me to write the preface. For he knows how fond I am of the Arctic and must have known that his book would give me rather a shock.

It did at first; and I thought, during the reading of half of the manuscript, that I could not possibly write a preface for it. But before I was through I realized that there was nothing wrong with it. The book is exactly what it should be.

There is a place for books on America by Americans who have been saturated in the local tradition from childhood; there is a place for books on America by Lord Bryce, an outsider who acquired an insight and was steeped in his subject; but there is a third place, perhaps even more interesting, for books on America by Englishmen who tour the country briefly and for the first time.

There are a good many people who want to know what any strange land seems like to a newcomer. That is exactly what Rossman tells you.

His Arctic is the kind of Arctic that the intelligent traveler will meet who has the sympathetic and open eyes that go with a tolerant but distinctly foreign point of view.

Rossman in Alaska is the newcomer, the tenderfoot, the outsider; amused, annoyed, and troubled by what he finds. He writes down as hardships the very things that some of the rest of us delight in, pointing out as drawbacks what we think are outstanding merits. He suffered partly because that was what he went there for. What would be the use of traveling and being comfortable all the time, when you could be even more comfortable at home for less money?

My own first journey to the Arctic was made in 1906-1907, and I stayed there that time only a little longer than Rossman stayed in his Arctic. But I did not print my story at once. I made a second expedition of four and a half years and then a third expedition of five and a half. It was only after a total of more than eleven years of Arctic living and sixteen years of thinking about it that I published, in 1922, the story of the adventures of 1906. I said, in the preface of that book, what I now want to say in the preface to Rossman's. It is all the more appropriate because I wrote it for my book and not for his:

“When first you leave home to travel in a foreign land you receive impressions more vivid than those of

any later journey to the same country. If you at once rush your views and observations into print you are likely to have an interesting book . . . (but) you will probably regret some parts of that book later. . . . As I look over my diaries of that time I shudder to think (that I might have published) everything I imagined I had seen and everything I thought I knew.”<sup>1</sup>

But, as I said in my preface to *Hunters of the Great North*, what my book gained in accuracy it undoubtedly lost in interest. It is, therefore, probably lucky that Rossman did not wait until his fresh view had been dulled by a multitude of experiences and obscured by the increase of information piled fact upon fact through later years. He writes more vividly now than he will be able to write ten years from now.

When you come back from your first trip to Rossman's part of arctic Alaska, you will tell a story much like his.

*Black Sunlight* is the impressions of a first visit, in that respect something like Borup's *A Tenderfoot with Peary*. It is the newcomer's truth about the Arctic.

VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

<sup>1</sup> Quotation, condensed, from preface to *Hunters of the Great North*, New York, 1922, and London, 1923.



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# BLACK SUNLIGHT

## A LOG OF THE ARCTIC

*How the  
Adventure began*

### JUNEAU TO TAKU GLACIER

*July, 1923.* "Things are never so bad they can't be worse," the cynics say. Still, life's low spots seem comparatively safe. It is when we are riding on the crest of the wave that Fate gets in her meanest blows.

My pulses beat to the rhythm of an extremely uplifted mood the morning I set out from Juneau to Taku Glacier, in a thirty-foot, flat-bottomed launch laden with all my worldly goods, including my cameras and thousands of feet of film, the result of a season spent in making moving picture studies of the vanishing Indians native to South Eastern Alaska.

Owing to President Harding's expected visit, eighteen motion picture outfits were operating in the district that summer, and I was stealing a march on them all. By leaving so early I would have my picture developed and ready for the market long before anybody else.

Generally, my assistant and guide, Walter Forest, accepted grudgingly my whole-hearted appreciation of self. Human nature being what it is, I dare say he had heard, during the last few weeks in the woods, a good deal about my cleverness. The golden glow of that particular dawn, however, found him as happy as his chief. Fair weather and a boat capable of doing eighteen knots an hour approximated Forest's idea of bliss.

The sun just lifted over the mountain tops as we pushed out on the channel; but even at that early hour Juneau harbor was alive with small boats hanging around to pick up salmon heads, a delicacy to be fed to the stock on the adjacent fox farms.

All this activity stimulated me further and I burst into song — throaty melody that was accompanied by the tooting of shrill whistles signaling traffic or saluting friendly craft. Walter responded by piling on every ounce of power. We made a record dash from port.

A gorgeous panorama of snow-capped peaks, rising from millions of acres of fir, spruce and pine, spread before us. The timber fragrance blending with the sea breeze proved more heady than draughts of champagne. Success mounted in my veins and I chanted it to the hills.

Slam! Just like that, right in the middle of a

high note, Fate dealt her evil blow. We were hardly an hour out when a severe shock threw Forest prone, and a harsh grating of submerged planks growled disaster. We had struck a snag! I stooped to rummage under the cargo, to ascertain the extent of the damage; but at the shifting of the first dunnage bag such a gusher drove up into my face that it almost drowned me.

“She’s stove her bottom!” I yelled.

Walter grabbed the wheel from where he lay and instantly swung her bow toward shore, making for a little beach that happened to be directly opposite. The several hundred yards of cold bright water that stretched between us and the land had changed abruptly from a phase of merry Nature bidding us “bon voyage,” to her frowning menace.

The heavy dunnage bag, dropped into its old position, had closed the fountain; still the leak was so bad that our small ship sank perceptibly inch by inch. Her engine throbbed steadily, like a stout heart doing its utmost to urge her on; but in sinking, the ship retarded her own speed so that the race against death now became a crawl. We stood as far forward as possible (she was sinking by the stern), and speechlessly watched her dying efforts to drag herself through the slowly shortening expanse of sea. Would she make it — or would she not?

She did not! Our craft literally sank under us and we were forced to jump and swim ashore — a chilly plunge!

With chattering teeth we clambered up the beach. I was completely ruined, but there seemed no time to think of that. I was a “news-paper” man first, a human being only afterwards. Instinct prompted me to get the story. Unstrapping the Graflex I carried on my shoulders, I had time to “shoot” the wreck before she vanished and took with her all that I possessed — all save the very wet clothes I stood up in.

My equipment was gone, my baggage was gone, and worse than both these, the many thousand feet of film representing my season’s work were gone. Later we salvaged the boat and the cameras, but the film was damaged beyond use.

### *Northern Lights Ahead*

A sad pair of dripping *voyageurs* marched back to Juneau.

Fortunately for me, though without effects I did not lack friends. I had been entertained at the Alaskan White House several times, and in this extremity former Governor Scott C. Bone, and Karl Theile, Secretary of Alaska, came to my assistance. They saw that I was in a pretty

bad plight, and the prospect of accomplishing anything looked bare. Self-complacence had oozed from me like gas from a pricked balloon. Still, I was determined not to return to the United States empty handed, and in this I had the support of both officials.

For the moment, President Harding's visit took precedence over everybody's private affairs. My mishap did show the proverbial lining in affording me the honor of meeting him; then, after the excitement of his day in Juneau had subsided, my two counsellors gave me some very sound advice.

They said: "Go north, young man. The other seventeen moving picture outfits now operating in this part of the world have left nothing unexploited. Since you have lost the chance of beating them to Broadway, with civilized news, why not take advantage of your present location to forestall them in the wilds? Go north — far beyond tourist travel. Get into the unknown country and take back something with a real live thrill — scenes that have never been filmed before."

The idea of photographing a complete cycle of Eskimo life, as lived on the northern shore of Alaska, appealed to me, so I determined to forge ahead and winter in the Arctic. This was not, to the residents of Juneau, an epoch-making

decision; but to a whilom law-student theatre manager, and motion picture producer, who had passed most of his winters in the steam-heated luxury of a New York club, it was sufficiently radical to help reëstablish his damaged self-confidence.

*Southward to the  
Far North*

Planning is easy, but the farther north one goes the more difficult it becomes to carry out any plan. Although the Governor arranged passage for me on the revenue cutter *Bear*, it soon developed that I would not be able to make connections down the Yukon and across North Sound in time to board her.

This second disappointment wounded my courage more than the first; and it was here that my good friend Karl Theile came to the rescue. I was despatched from Juneau to Seattle, in order to make a ship bound for the most northerly point on the Alaskan coast, and that late in the season, too. It seems madness, but such is travel in remote districts.

Theile sent me to his friend William T. Lopp, then Chief of the United States Bureau of Education for Alaska, knowing the Bureau of Education's ship *Boxer* was about to make her maiden voyage from Seattle to Point Barrow,

and that William Lopp, in the kindness of his great heart, would be willing to take a shipwrecked camera-man along.

*August 4.* Lopp and I stood on the dock. Though both of us were travellers and had sailed from many ports we could not help feeling the significance of this departure.

We were seriously delayed in sailing. The *Bower*, formerly a training ship for Annapolis midshipmen, had been equipped with Diesel engines, but time had not permitted overlaying her hull with "iron bark," the strong Australian wood that enables ships to withstand the crushing force of polar ice. It was therefore absolutely necessary to reach Point Barrow before the pack came down. A half a day, an hour, might make all the difference, but Seattle's busy harbor still held us fast.

I glanced for the hundredth time at the little vessel which was to take us on so great a voyage. She was, by reason of her heavy cargo, low in the water. Her hold was crammed with supplies, her decks piled high. I thought grimly that she carried much gear but no luxuries. There were oil, fuel, lumber, cement and flour and coarse foodstuffs. A rough unpretentious cargo for a land stripped by God of pretensions.

In the dull glare of lights aboard the adjacent hulks, now straining at their anchors, the bow-

sprits seemed to lunge hungrily toward the open sea, as if to reveal the mystery of the water, and the import of my own adventure. I knew that soon enough this pleasant, animated, work-galvanized spot, these garish noises and pungent smells, would be but a biting memory, while I spun out a torpid existence in a strange, pale, frozen land.

I felt a trifle sorry for myself, but I was startled from the reverie by the throaty whistle of the *Boxer*. Captain Whitlam admonished us to get aboard, and the order was given to cast off.

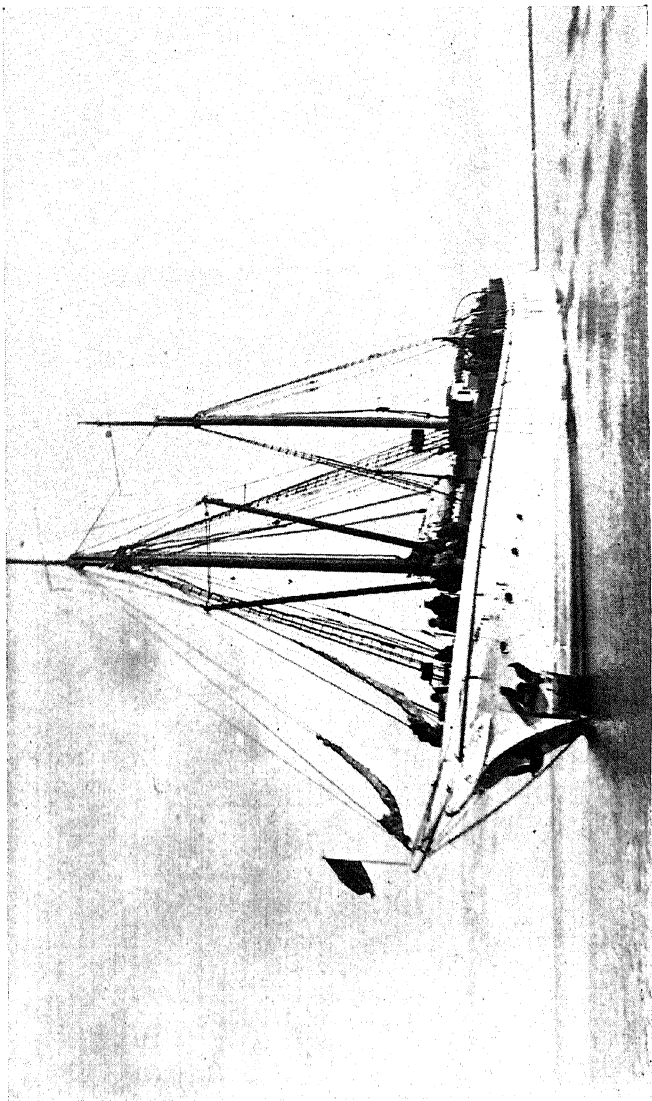
When Seattle's lights were quenched by distance I went below, intending to turn in, but on the stairway I met Lopp, who informed me that our cabin was going to be more than a little crowded. We had for company a physician on his way to a government reservation north of the Arctic Circle.

We drew lots for the bunks in the cabin. Lopp got the lower and the doctor the upper, which left me the mattress on the floor. This was to be my bed for many weeks, but as it was my last chance to make the North I felt satisfied with any quarters under any conditions.

### *Black Sunlight*

Morning brought with it a peaceful sense of rest and the sea's romance. On shipboard, if





THE BOXER



nowhere else, man finds time to "invite his soul." Hour after hour Lopp and I spent in good talk. I possessed only the tenderfoot's book knowledge of what I was going to, and it was an inestimable advantage to gather thus the fruits of his thirty-five years' experience in the Arctic.

When we wished to talk alone we would find an opening on the bow between stacks of lumber and cement blocks, or go aft and crawl between cases of kerosene, gasoline tanks, and bags of coal.

Sheltered thus I heard from Lopp a tale of the overcoming of almost superhuman difficulties, in a totally strange, bleak, virgin land. Apparently no situation could arise too tough for him to tackle, as there was no detail too trivial for his attention.

"Did you buy that first-aid kit?" he demanded one day, referring to some of his final hasty instructions.

When I admitted I had, under protest, purchased the supplies, he explained their probable use.

"Wait until you find yourself out on flat snow-covered ocean ice under a twenty-four-hour sun, and you'll send me a vote of thanks."

The subject seemed a cheerful one to me. I have always been a lover of daylight. Christmas time, I thought, would more likely prove my

Waterloo; but when I said as much my mentor laughed.

"Everybody talks about the monotony of darkness, without giving a thought to the monotony of light. Imagine a vast snow-covered plain dazzlingly white under full sunshine; miles and miles of scintillating frost diamonds surrounding you on every hand — a sea of light, limitless light!

"It is an intoxicating sensation to swim in light. You feast your eyes on the dazzle for a while; then gradually you realize the absence of tree, house, cutbank, any shadow spot on which to rest your gaze."

"That sounds like summer skiing over glaciers," I said.

"Yes, a similar situation might happen in the mountains at high noon; but by evening your world there would be shadowed, and relief come automatically. During Arctic summer, however, there is no evening, no gentle dusk. The bright scene palpitates, the sun glares on. Even the roof of your tent at midnight is a golden drum through which merciless light filters its painful glory."

"Snow blindness," I suggested, with a catch in my breath, and with visions of being led back from the hunt totally incapacitated.

Lopp reassured me.

“Not for white men who have modern appliances to protect their eyes, and sense enough to use care. The natives, however, pay. They cannot always obtain glasses, and their home-made wooden contraptions permit such a narrow field of vision that the wearers are seriously handicapped. Impatience and their usual improvidence make them take chances, and they suffer horribly. To us the twenty-four-hour day means continuous opportunity—to them it is black sunlight.”

The phrase arrested me. I had read my share of Arctic romances where heroines are suddenly struck blind for months, always recovering in time to recognize the hero and fall on the right man's neck, and I knew that that sort of thing was sheer exaggeration. Snow blindness, so called, is not absolute blindness at any stage, but only an inflamed condition of the eyes so bad that it becomes impossible to hold them open an instant or to look at anything. The pain is so acute that floods of tears pour down the sufferer's face; the irritation can only be cured by rest *in a dark place*. I had not before considered that the “land of the midnight sun” would be, weeks at a stretch, a land utterly devoid of darkness. Indeed, to the suffering natives, it must seem “black sunlight.”

*Gold in the  
Hills*

**KETCHIKAN:**

On the evening of the third day we descried the harbor of Ketchikan. From the distance her lamps glowed softly, beckoning us over the dark water. They were like the footlights of a miniature stage. Behind them sparkled the peaks of snow mountains around whose slopes hung a goblin curtain of purple haze, while above the stars glittered brilliantly in cold, clear, Alaskan night.

We warped into the dock and I went ashore to look up some old friends. The *Boxer* meantime took on oil and effected a few minor repairs to her engines.

Ketchikan is a typical thriving frontier town boasting motion picture houses, and modern department stores carrying the latest styles. Fruits, a luxury in Alaska, were plentiful here, being shipped from California.

Many industries are centred in Ketchikan. There is gold in the hills, there are halibut and cod fisheries, and a vast lumber field looms as the potential seat of the paper and pulp industry. Everyone is busy. My friends told me the town had doubled its population within five years and was expected to do even better than that during the next five.

My visit was cut short by the warning blast of the *Boxer's* whistle, and we were soon chugging across the Gulf of Alaska headed for Nome.

### *Ship-Mates*

Dirty weather struck us on the second day out. The *Boxer*, weighted down with cargo, reeled through heavy seas and fog, till at times it seemed she must go under.

Lopp and I were forced to discontinue our sessions in our little office between cases, tins, and lumber piles, so we took refuge in the radio room with Harold Knight, our radio engineer, who, despite literary leanings, had a reputation for knowing his business thoroughly. He had installed the *Boxer's* wireless himself and was going to the Arctic to test it.

I can see him now with his six feet of bone and muscle sprawled out from a small chair, his wavy blond hair tumbled over his eyes, while he talked leisurely of adventures encountered in the world's remote places.

He was a very likable boy, well read, with an acute perception of human nature, a sense of humor slightly tinged with irony, and a laugh open and sincere. His laugh, moreover, was always on tap. Not once, during the many disappointments and dangers we encountered, did Knight's cheerful disposition fail. "Don't let it

beat you," he invariably commented, when I felt blue over setbacks that threatened to knock my expedition galley-west.

Knight's enthusiasm for plucking news out of the air kindled us all. There is a strange fascination in obtaining messages from ships thousands of miles away. Lopp, who never let an opportunity pass, seized in the wireless a chance to provide entertainment, and became a newspaper publisher while aboard the *Boxer*.

At midnight our operator would listen in on the news messages flashed from the naval wireless station at Arlington near Washington. These were copied on the typewriter, carbons were made, the results were edited by Knight and me, and behold — our newspaper! We started with a competition for a suitable name for this midget journal, and Lopp's suggestion, *The Sea Parrot*, met with instant approval.

The papers, delivered in the morning, set the pace for eager conversation over the breakfast table.

One of *The Sea Parrot's* most enthusiastic backers was Clark, the ship's cook.



“Cookie,” the  
Ship’s  
Gyroscope

If society were graded according to the real importance of its members there can be no doubt that cooks would reign like kings. As it is, the high priests of the gastronomic art merely rule our individual destinies. On the sea many of us feel that we can dispense with these wielders of skillets and ladles, and yet, strange to say, it is at sea that “Cookie” comes into his own, and shows off his richest vein of character.

The *Boxer’s* cook was about forty, with coarse face, and large hands very red from frequent immersions in hot water. He had cooked for twenty years on ships of the North, and had served many kinds of masters and crews.

His joviality and his gyroscopic ability were positively amazing. In the midst of violent storms, when the *Boxer* was dancing and lunging around the ocean like a boxer in the ring, when we were pitched backward and forward by the most unexpected tantrums of wind and sea, our cook, with a bland smile on his face, would stand nonchalantly surveying our ludicrous attempts at balance.

When the diners slid from the benches at table as the ship rocked to and fro, Clark would whisk

smilingly out of the galley, supporting on one ham of a hand a tray piled perilously high with dishes of appetizing food.

When one or the other of us, suffering too acutely, and feeling it urgent, nay vitally necessary to depart, would do so in a vainglorious manner, so as to hide his shame, Cookie never failed to recognize the real nature of the exit and break into mocking laughter.

He was at his very best when trying to dodge the results of "Boxcar Slim's" trick at the wheel — but Slim deserves personal notice.

*Slim:*  
*The Landlubber*

"Boxcar Slim," an outstanding figure among the crew, and a source of joy to us all, was a gentleman hobo turned sailor. The shortage of volunteers for such an arduous trip afforded almost any man a chance to sign on. Slim made a practise of hanging around the docks, and before he knew it the call of the sea had triumphed in his restless blood.

He stood six feet three and was thinner than the proverbial rail. In his long face glowed a pair of melancholy eyes, their expression belied by a mouth generally stretched to a somewhat foolish grin. His scrawny neck was always en-

veloped in a high stiff collar, from which gallantly flowed a voluminous Windsor tie. A prodigious pair of shoes, and trousers so baggy they would have been an out size for a hippopotamus, completed the apparel of this "boxcar beau."

His arrival aboard the ship had been a riot from a nautical standpoint. Our crew watched with raucous enjoyment the careful manner in which he picked up his large feet, and the giraffe-like daintiness wherewith he made his uneven way over coils of rope, oil puddles, cases, chains, and winches that cluttered the *Boxer's* deck. His trousers, inflated with wind till they resembled two huge sausages, suggested a balloon ascension. His tie fluttered in his eyes.

"Look slippy or your tie'll whip ye to death!" one of the seamen jeered. It was about the mildest remark Slim heard that day.

Quite unperturbed the newcomer answered all raillery with his usual grin. For a while he underwent a continuous initiation from the crew, but he took their worst with such good grace that they finally accepted him. By and by he sought, in his blundering way, the knowledge that would make him a navigator. He learnt the difference between port and starboard, began to say "aft" instead of "the back end of the boat," and so was

finally inducted into the mystery of the compass and the intricacies of steering.

When Slim took the helm, all hands and passengers, even if they were not on deck, knew it immediately. We would feel the *Boxer* slip decidedly off her course and then be wrenched back, as our hobo pulled desperately at the wheel. It was these little side-slips of Slim's that brought out "Cookie's" truly great resource!

Clark would be walking down the galley with a bowl of soup perched on his hand when the *Boxer* gave a premonitory twist, showing that Slim's grip was faulty, and that the boat was about to "Charleston." At this warning the cook would promptly hurl his soup out of a convenient port to prevent it from being spilled on the floor. A moment later he would thrust his head through the hole where the soup had vanished and indulge in an outburst of classical profanity, invariably winding up with a good-natured laugh at Slim's honest but ill-fated attempts as helmsman.

"Slim's writing his name on the ocean again," the bos'n, George Porter, would say with a shrug.

If that is the sailors' name for such antics, he certainly inscribed his John Hancock all over the Alaskan Gulf.

*“ Mutt and Jeff ”*

Despite these hectic moments “ Boxcar Slim ” became a favorite in the foc’sle, where he regaled the crew with tales of his hobo trips. These yarns of one who had navigated the land in mastless freight cars and in sailless coal-gondolas proved a welcome novelty. They particularly amused George Porter, the half-Eskimo bos’n.

The bos’n’s father had been captain of an old time whaling ship, and was a famous Arctic character. When his son found that because of his mixed blood he had to pursue a middle course through life he became a rover and sailor, taking his “ in-between ” position stoically.

During the war he enlisted and was one of the few men with Eskimo blood who served as an American soldier. Filled with curiosity, quiet, and always availing himself of an opportunity to learn, George had acquired much desultory information during war days, and had emerged with a wider mental horizon and a “ background ” which few Eskimos possess. But he had, after all, only a rudimentary education to start with, and was forced to return to the sea.

Aboard ship George was an efficient fellow. He kept his men well in hand, so down in the foc’sle he was looked upon with respect. It was between this half-Eskimo and “ Boxcar Slim ”

that a quaint friendship sprang up. Our hobo was determined to become a real salty "tar," and he followed the bos'n about seeking to increase his sea-lore.

Now George was a little man, about five feet two or three, very quick and active, and always working. Just to watch that squat figure hurrying deftly here and there, with Slim ambling awkwardly after him, was enough to raise a laugh. The crew dubbed them "Mutt and Jeff."

### *Adverse Winds*

Against sharp winds, heavy sleet, and thick fogs, we nosed into the historic Behring Sea, that dangerous and turbulent water which separates the North American continent from Asia.

Our next port was to be St. Michael, the deserted terminus of the Yukon River and the gateway to Nome.

Here many years ago adventurers from all walks of life, bent on reaching the golden city, had poured in via Yukon River boats. Today entire fleets of these river ships, once crowded with human freight, lie rotting on the beaches. General stores that in colorful days gone by were centres of profit in this vast Northland are boarded up. The Government barracks lie deserted and the streets are weed-grown.

The very drabness of the place fascinated me as I walked about the paths that once were highways. Only "Reindeer Mary," an Eskimo woman, remains to tell the story of that adventurous, gold-crazy band, and of those brawling, dramatic days.

The weather proved no better between St. Michael and Unalakleek, where we unloaded a general cargo for Government teachers. And as we put out again it began to blow. When the last village had disappeared Captain Whitlam came on deck and spoke to me. I shall never forget that moment. With a few words he blasted my hopes, promised to smash my expedition and to puncture my dreams. He told me the *Boxer* would not stop at Nome!

This meant ruin. The Captain's explanation that the wind was blowing in-shore, and an attempt to land at Nome would wreck us, did not help my plight. My excursion into the wilderness — the Phoenix that had risen from my first disaster — was now threatened by a similar fate, yet I was determined to take this other chance.

I implored Whitlam to land. I told him it was absolutely necessary for me to get to Nome where I would find my film and much paraphernalia without which it would be senseless for me to continue.

In a polite but frigid tone he informed me that

he was captain of the ship, and the only thing that would change his mind would be a change of wind.

In despair I went to the radio cabin to tell Knight my woes. "Don't let it beat you," he urged. Then he pledged me that wherever the *Boxer* next stopped, he would get off with me and together we would work our way back to Nome.

This was typical of Knight. But even his generous resolution failed to alleviate my despair, and when I turned in I was a "nervous wreck."

### *Luck Turns*

#### NOME

*August 20.* During the night the gods of chance gave me a new deal and I "drew a royal flush" in the shape of a spanking off-shore wind.

Captain Whitlam changed his mind, as he had promised, with the change in the weather. An off-shore wind would prevent the *Boxer* from piling up on the coast, and now we could make a safe landing.

It was a happy young man who stood forward, straining his eyes to catch an early glimpse of Nome. Golden Nome! Once the greatest mining camp in the world, when ten thousand tents were pitched along the beach, housing the gold-



maddened men who made of the place a riotous city where life ran high and blood ran unheeded.

Nome today is just a village with a main street.

Back of Nome are curious mounds looking like large hills. Lopp told me they were the mounds of sand piled high by the adventurers who fought for gold. He swiftly sketched the town's history and explained the origin of the peculiar name, which is nothing more or less than an historic mistake.

"Nome" first appeared on British Admiralty charts after the Franklin Search Expedition, being given that name by Kellett in 1849. It seems that the original sheet which charted these shores bore the word "Name" with a question mark after it, indicating that this particular point would be named later. When the draftsman interpreted the memorandum, he evidently misread it and on the finished map placed the word "Nome." The mistake was not rectified, so Nome it is to this day.

### *Captain Roald Amundsen*

The second boat was putting off for shore and I eagerly clambered in.

On a first glimpse Nome is like any other small town. There are the Chamber of Commerce, the

Miners and Merchants Bank, a pool room, and drygoods and grocery stores all strung along the main street.

Last but not least is the Lomen Brothers drug store — the centre of activity, gossip, society, and trade. You can buy almost anything there. Virtually every business transaction in the North at some time passes through this store. I picked up my films and made a few purchases.

There, too, I met Captain Roald Amundsen. I was immediately impressed with this powerful character. The tall Norwegian explorer's white head, his great nose jutting out like a bird's beak, his humorous crooked smile with the pipe-droop at one corner of his mouth, the lifted eyebrow over the piercing seaman's eye, the steadfast glance accustomed to scanning distance for the undiscovered, make him a marked figure in any company.

He is a man of brief speech, letting action talk louder than words. Since it is the nature of the human mind to be fascinated by what it cannot fathom, the explorer has unconsciously classed himself with those strong silent fellows so popular among the ladies. There are many varieties of the quiet type. President Coolidge is one and Roald Amundsen another.

A second glance at the Captain raised the question whether he was born reticent, or had

acquired it through the exigencies of his career and the astuteness which has governed it. Any child could see that his is the face of "a wise old bird."

Amundsen seemed pleased as I explained my plans, but he was dubious about their success. When I said that I intended to bring back a comprehensive record of Eskimo life gathered from the vicinity of Point Barrow and Wainwright, he replied: "Maybe you will and maybe you won't. You have to live through it to get it."

He told me he had a shack at Wainwright, and asked me to carry some letters to his friends there and at Point Barrow, which, of course, I gladly agreed to do.

*"The Malamute"*  
*made famous by*  
*Robert W. Service*

After leaving Captain Amundsen I strolled up the street and found the Malamute saloon, the fame of which was broadcast in "Sourdoughs."

The old bar was still in the place. That and a few mementos were all that remained to suggest the story of lurid days. During the gold rush miners and prospectors, a motley crew, would drop in, push a "poke" of gold across the

bar, and call for drinks for the house. Today you lay down prosaic currency and ask politely for grape-crush or sarsaparilla. Imagine some of the old boys "whooping it up" on soda pop!

From the Malamute I set out for the Golden Gate Hotel where I had been told I could find accommodations with hot and cold running water. This sounded pleasant, for the bathing facilities on the *Boxer* were more or less nil.

Greeted volubly at the Golden Gate by Jim Swartzell, the proprietor, I put in a request for a bath, and expected to have it immediately — but not so at the Golden Gate.

Swartzell explained there was but one bath and perhaps it might be occupied. He went upstairs, reconnoitred, and returned with the information that the coast was clear, but that I would, however, have to wait for hot water. Then he descended into the boiler room. In a few moments I heard a clanking and hissing.

Swartzell waddled out of the basement explaining that it was necessary to raise steam pressure in order that the "running water" might be forced up to the second floor where it was expected to "run." Despite such tribulations and delays I did, however, manage to get my bath.

My quarters, as Swartzell promised, were spacious. They almost took in all outdoors, being

decorated in strips of paper that hung down walls thinner than I would have believed it possible to erect. The room was like one of those highly sensitized sound reflectors.—I heard everything going on in the hotel.

*Social Life  
in Nome*

After this “auditory night” I sauntered about the city and viewed the Alaskan Dream Theatre and the Eagle Dance Hall, high spots of Nome’s entertainment. The “Alaskan Dream” is the most northern motion picture theatre on the American continent. It seats about four hundred patrons, who are entertained by a piano sadly out of tune, and by positively ancient films. To view these the populace willingly pays a dollar a head. Pictures are shown once a week and, on very special occasions, twice a week.

Persons anxious to “put on the dog” of a Saturday night, first eat at Mrs. Niebling’s, the Delmonico’s of Nome, then enjoy the performance at the Alaskan Dream and wind up a riotous evening in the Eagle Dance Hall, where the orchestra comprises a piano, a drum, and a violin.

One difficulty about dancing in Nome is the shortage of girls. Dancers at the Eagle Hall, however, do not let this interfere with their pleas-

ure. The obstacle is overcome by ingenuity. Of the plethora of male dancers some have patches pinned by the dancemaster to their coat tails, signifying that for the nonce, or rather for the dance, they are "girls." It is amusing to watch one of the husky sour-doughs tap one of these "girls" on the shoulder and glide away with "her" into a dreamy waltz. Square dances are still danced occasionally at the Eagle, the figures being called out from the orchestra platform.

*The Alaskan Reindeer  
King: Carl Lomen*

It was at Nome that I found opportunity for a conversation with Carl Lomen, the guiding genius of the business family which is virtually in control of the Alaskan reindeer industry.

Carl came to Alaska with his father in 1900. After three years he returned to his home in St. Paul, Minnesota, but found that he could no longer be contented there.

In September, 1914, when certain restrictions regarding the possession of reindeer by white people were removed by the Government, Lomen purchased his first herd. It numbered 1,200 head. Today Lomen & Company own more than seventy thousand head of reindeer, and grazing rights on six and a half million acres of

land (a territory one million acres larger than the state of Massachusetts), as well as four large ammonia plants.

For the last three years Carl Lomen has been making annual journeys to the States to lay before the public the reindeer situation and its future. The nation's meat supply will be considerably increased when reindeer is marketed in America. It is a finer meat than venison and will be cheaper than mutton or beef. Lomen points out that the reindeer feeds itself, living in winter on lichens, called "reindeer moss" (though it is not a moss at all), and in summer on fresh grass. Outside of food which it furnishes, as well as the finest and most serviceable of Arctic garments, the reindeer is used extensively as a draft animal. More than seventy-five per cent of the reindeer in Alaska are owned by the natives under the direction of the United States Bureau of Education. Lomen & Company acts both for itself and for the natives in commercializing the industry and in making shipments to the United States. Their difficulty at present is the shortage of bottoms; every outgoing ship carries as full a load as possible as the demand for reindeer meat in American cities is already far greater than the supply.

*Near-Tragedy  
of a Husky*

On my way back to the beach I met Jean Dupertius, Superintendent of the northwestern district of Alaskan schools. He was to meet, on board the *Boxer*, a newly married couple, who were to open a school at Shismaref. Dupertius was to induct them into their duties.

As we walked along to the ship's launch, a big black, husky dog bounded at the superintendent's heels. The dog seemed to understand that his master was leaving. He jumped up and pawed Dupertius as if to detain him. The school man laughed and patted the animal, ordering him to go back.

While we embarked the dog stood with his forefeet in the water, whining and pleading to be taken along. When the launch had carried us out quite a distance, someone on the boat called to the forlorn husky. Immediately he sprang into the icy water and swam to us. Dupertius helped the bedraggled creature into the launch; unfortunately, however, there was no place for him aboard the *Boxer*, so the school man was obliged to order him back to land.

The husky looked into his master's eyes, sprang into the water, and set out for shore.

The animal was already numb from cold.





CARL LOMEN, STEFANSSON, AND RASMUSSEN IN CONFERENCE



The effort of swimming to us had taxed his strength. We saw him falter opposite a concrete breakwater which offered no salvation, for the sides of that were smooth and slippery. But the distressed dog made toward it. He sprang from the channel again and again, attempting to clutch that cruel stone. Each time his paws slid and he would fall back, quite unable to get a footing.

Dupertius stood in the boat with clenched hands, calling encouragement to his pet. The dog struggled valiantly, but the task overcame him. He sank. The master turned his head away, and I felt my own throat choking.

Then a shout went up from the beach. Native workers had seen the struggle. They rushed out on top of the breakwater and dropped a rope to the husky. A sigh of heartfelt relief broke from Dupertius as the game animal was drawn to safety.

The launch's motor started again and we came alongside the *Boxer*.

The ship now got under way without trouble. I felt easy in mind as we headed up Behring Strait toward Point Barrow, the jumping-off place for my adventure.

*A Honeymoon in  
the "Friendly Arctic"*

*August 22.* Very early this morning we hove to off Shishmaref. It was a dreary, disheartening scene not at all relieved by the chill dawn. Through dull grey light we could make out a scraggy beach and back of it the snow-peaked mountains of the Saw-Tooth Range, icily uninviting.

Before leaving Seattle I had invested in Vilhjalmur Stefansson's books, "My Life with the Eskimo" and "The Friendly Arctic," which together form a comprehensive study of ten years spent beyond Point Barrow. These books were published in the order given, the significance of which I then failed to realize. I had begun with the second volume, hoping by that to form a background for my activities, and I was enjoying the reading immensely; but the stark glimpses which the country vouchsafed as we came farther and farther north did not seem to bear out its engaging title.

"So this is the friendly Arctic," I thought with a wry smile, at each new revelation. I did not realize then what I do now, that it is the emptiness and simplicity of such uncultivated shores that make them inhospitable. They are not like anything the traveller has ever seen, and

strangeness, whether of places or people, is a barrier to sympathy. By instinct the strange is hostile. It is only when we have grown intimate with our surroundings or our fellows that we call them "friends."

For weeks the North continued to crash raw impression on raw impression, all seemingly as harsh and threatening as the proverbial bad step-mother. Shishmaref was one of these impressions. It dampened the hope of every soul aboard the *Boxer*!

Dupertius came on deck and looked compassionately at his charges — the bridal couple who were to make this barren spot their home. They stood a little aloof from us and from each other, gazing dejectedly at the shore.

They had kept aloof from each other during the whole voyage. In this age of the Lucy Stone League, and female independence, the "you stand on your feet and I'll stand on mine" sort of modern partnership, one can never tell how to judge such situations. It may have been the lady's wish, or it might have arisen from that mistaken male idea of "beginning as one intends to continue," or possibly, on both sides, from sheer embarrassment, but the little schoolmaster had neglected his wife conspicuously all the way, and now left her to contemplate the bleakness of her future quite alone.

Such circumstances as theirs could only be alleviated by a touch of human kindness or humor. But instead of these, agony seemed piled on agony.

Cookie failed us first. It was hours before breakfast-time and no food had been provided—not even a cup of coffee to fortify the inner man. While courage struggled against that sinking feeling, our ears were assailed by Captain Whitlam's crisp voice announcing: "All passengers will be put ashore without their baggage!" He condescended to explain that the bad weather made it imperative for the *Boxer* to continue her trip north at once so as to return before the ice caught her.

What are mere food and shelter compared to a trousseau!

At this frightful prospect of losing all her little treasures the bride's fortitude gave way. Her face twisted and her body drooped perceptibly. I have never seen a woman look more pitiful. In vain she sought a manly shoulder on which to weep. The last shreds of her young husband's heroism had gone down before hunger. He was a very hollow reed, and made no attempt whatever to acquit himself as the protector, champion, or friend.

We did not blame the boy too much. While that priceless gift, imagination, leads explorers

through unknown lands, feeding them thrills, the lack of it can let a small mind in for horrible experience in those same lands.

At the outset of the trip the youth had been full of hope. He pictured himself happy in this novel place, with her, teaching the Eskimos animal husbandry and simple crafts. He was human and presumably in love, with a natural, virile desire to show off; and he was ingenuous too. We all saw that at first his appreciation of the leading man's unique performance dimmed scenery in his mental vision. But as the *Boxer* continued north the values of the stage-set impinged on consciousness. There is no avoiding truth amid the rugged emptiness of the Arctic views. Day by day he lost self-confidence.

The final blow came with Shishmaref itself. He had known that "home" was to be a wooden house among the native igloos. But a wooden house, even a one-roomed shack, is not deplorable to fancy. "Love in a cottage" has become a symbol. We know the formula: climbing roses outside, light, warmth and life within — fit stuff for "pipe dreams"! The actual sight of a bare little wooden dwelling in a scene so vast that the shack is dwarfed to a pin-head, a mere speck in the country's ragged grandeur, strikes other chords.

When a phase of Nature is too great for a

soul to encompass it, the lesser trembles. These children were both terrified, and the surprise of hardship, which should have drawn them together, seemed rather to act as an icy wedge driven between two hearts. Nevertheless, loving or unloving, their time had come and they had to go over the ship's side into the launch.

"If I was wife to him and going to live there, I'd slip betwixt the treads and end it," a seaman remarked.

"Ya! Might as well be killed by cold one way as another," came the answer.

I shivered, and sent up a sympathetic prayer for the poor little homesick woman in the stern sheets of the launch, starting away to that devastating village, without any of the pretty things she had provided to make the place look habitable. How long would she have to search the horizon, wet-eyed, for a glimpse of the returning *Boxer*, bearing so much, or so little, of home atmosphere as can be conveyed in trunks?

*Sail ho!*

KOTZEBUE:

*August 23.* It was twilight — the kind of twilight that gives everything a dreamy appearance. Hardly a ripple stirred the ocean. I felt that even I was part of a dream as we slid quietly



through the water toward the lights of Kotzebue glimmering faintly in purple haze. The sun had almost set and far on the horizon lay a last faint flush. Overhead, a clear moon travelled majestically to her zenith, dropping silver brilliants that quivered on the Arctic sea.

I was gazing forward. Suddenly a square-rigged ship loomed fantastically out of the twilight. Her sails deflated by the absence of wind, hung loosely, and for a moment in the gloaming she looked like some huge mythical night bird.

We veered close to her. Captain Whitlam came on deck with a megaphone. As we drew nearer we could see, by the moon's light, men rushing to the rail eager for news. Then eerie silence was shattered by a booming, rolling voice that called in echoing fellowship: "Hello there, Lopp!"

Captain Backland of the *C. S. Holmes* knew his old friend was bound north on the *Boxer*.

When bantering greetings had been chevied back and forth, Captain Whitlam hallooed the question that is paramount in the minds of Arctic seamen: "How's the ice?"

"She's on her way down. You'd better hurry. I'm playing safe," was the reply.

For a few moments more conversation plied over the water, questions and answers becoming

fainter and fainter as the ships drew apart. When at last voices could no longer be heard, the *C. S. Holmes* bade us Godspeed with three blasts of her whistle, and was obscured by distance. The twilight settled into night as we dropped anchor.

Kotzebue's name sounds bigger than the place itself. There are perhaps a dozen shacks to the village. One houses a tiny postoffice, another a school, the rest being trading stations and crude homes for the several traders.

It is not a beautiful place by any means. Our nostrils were assailed at once by a particularly atrocious odor, our eyes confronted a beach as scraggly as the one at Shishmaref, and our ears were beleaguered by an incessant whining and howling from dogs chained to stakes.

The smell emanated from hundreds of salmon that were being prepared by a score of Eskimos. These were the first natives I had seen within the Arctic Circle. Their squat but sturdy persons interested me greatly as they deftly wielded their knives and split the big fish in halves by hand, then hung them to dry upon large racks elevated beyond the reach of four-footed prowlers.

As Lopp and I walked toward them I was puzzled by an occasional flash of color in the garments worn by the natives, and was surprised to find that many of the women had donned calico

Mother Hubbard dresses over their parkas and skin trousers.

Our arrival, of course, attracted much attention. It took some time to make our way up the sloping beach, for Lopp was frequently arrested by welcome, but a very few moments sufficed to introduce the handful of white men and women who formed the colony. There were the post-mistress, an elderly widow, the school-teacher and his wife, and the three traders among whom stood Paul Davidowics.

The Russian (he had come into Alaska with the early settlers from the land of the Czars) was most hearty in his welcome. Davidowics was over fifty years old but looked no more than forty, despite the fact that his hair was iron grey. When I first saw him he wore a rough shirt open at the collar, revealing a bull neck, and a pair of dungarees were lumpily tied around a waist of sinew. His arms hung at his sides in that peculiar slouchy manner common to men of great strength. A ruddy complexion offset his weather-scarred face.

He was, I learned, a real power in the community. The Eskimos knew him to be honest in all his dealing, and they respected him also for his knowledge of their own ways. He was a river-man, a hunter and trapper of fame, and knew how to handle his dogs and sled on the trail.

Their language, too, came almost as fluently to him as his native tongue.

At noon the following day — for I had gladly accepted an invitation to remain on shore over night, and had enjoyed a sound sleep at the school-house — I went over to Paul Davidowics' trading station. The shanty was a gloomy place filled with a musty odor. Boxes and crates were piled high until there seemed barely enough room to get about.

The Russian proudly displayed his stores and lavished his hospitality on me. We lunched together, sitting on empty boxes, with a packing case for a table. The main course of our meal was hardtack and sardines, which we scooped out of a tin with our knives. Then came the *pièce de résistance*, some old, flaccid-looking store cheese. This was supplemented by coffee, good coffee brewed on a little one-burner oil stove by our sides. Our cups were empty milk cans.

During the repast, Davidowics explained much of the manners and customs of the Eskimos, told me some of the difficulties I was certain to encounter, and occasionally gave out bits of his own romantic life. I learned that he had "gone through" several small fortunes but had always come back, broke, to his trading station.

*A Hidden Mountain  
of Jade*

The Russian spoke of gold in the hills back of Kotzebue, and then mysteriously mentioned "jade."

Apparently all out-of-the-way places court re-discovery with stories of abandoned treasure. Each plays its own line. Fair Spanish galleons sunk full of golden moidores and doubloons have been preëmpted by the tropics. Pearls of unbelievable beauty and size belong to the South Sea Islands. The Arctic is not behind her sisters, but she scorns the fragmentary limit of riches once salvaged from Mother Earth and lost again. A land with lap full of unbounded wealth, offered freely for the taking, must be spectacular in fable too. Her forests spread to billions, her coal mines burn forever and are not consumed, the strata of her deep foundations are glutted full of oil, and her romance is built on the same scale.

Close questioning drew from Davidowics a queer, intriguing yarn of native jade. Minted coin in buried chests was not enough for the Arctic; she must throw into the scale a mountain of precious stone — a whole mountain of jade — hidden in the silent fastness of her unknown forests. Perhaps wild caribou migrate across it.

Maybe the Eskimos and Indians have fought upon its face, but the white man knows it not.

This storied prize has lured geologists for years. Survey parties have kept open eyes, you may be sure, when working in the district. If any of them have ever found any trace of it they have not given a sign. The white man does not know — yet, but the natives do. They come out of the hills bearing jade, and when questioned they merely grunt.

The puzzle is how the Eskimos, with their crude implements, manage to mine the jade — a very hard stone. Nevertheless, somehow, they get it, *somewhere* back in the hills. It has been carved and handed about among them for generations.

So much for the story mine host told over our coffee and little fishes. My interest was kindled then and there almost to the point of abandoning the camera for a prospecting kit. But details I learned from others, later, quelled enthusiasm.

There surely is a supply of olive green moss jadite in the North. Its exact location has not been discovered, but is supposed to be at the head of the Kobuk river. Authorities agree on these points, for the visible product is unmistakable.

In “The Friendly Arctic” Vilhjálmur Stefansson, enumerating ethnological specimens purchased at Point Barrow, says: “Another re-

markable specimen was a lip button, or labret, made of 'American jade' (jadite). This beautiful stone is one of the toughest and least workable, and still the ancient Eskimos made adzes, knives and ornaments of it."

It was blowing up when we left Kotzebue and headed for Cape Lisburne. A day before we reached the Cape we drove into the teeth of a furious Arctic gale. The thermometer fell rapidly and Captain Whitlam's face became graver than usual.

I was no seaman but it wasn't hard for me to tell that the *Boxer* and her passengers were in a nasty position.

The cold wind howled around us for days and the ship slid sickeningly down huge waves to wallow deep in the trough of the seas. As far as one could see there was nothing but mountainous white breakers churned into fury by the blast. Badly battered, we eventually passed Cape Lisburne. Here the storm increased to such violence that the Captain, although exceedingly anxious to get farther north before the ice came down, was obliged to order the *Boxer* back to the shelter of the Cape.

For four days we were hove to. The second day we ran out of drinking water. Our situation became desperate. There was only one way to get water — by going ashore. A volunteer

crew, including the author, clambered into the *Boxer's* skiff, and made for land. We filled two barrels from a spring, and successfully returned.

Presently the weather cleared a little and for the second time we left Cape Lisburne. But our hopes were soon destroyed. It seemed impossible the storm could grow worse, yet it did. And it grew colder.

Life on board became almost unbearable. The little ship was running awash, and waves broke incessantly over her battered bow, flooding the decks. The water seeped down the hatches and into our quarters. At every turn of her propeller she groaned and shivered, as did her passengers and crew.

The morale of the men was broken. Nearly everybody lay ill. And the thermometer kept dropping. It was impossible to stay on deck. The wind cut to the bone, and whined through the rigging. Below it was just as bad. Puddles of icy water stood in the passages and pools surrounded our bunks. Meals were a joke, providing one had an acute sense of humor. Otherwise they were an abomination. It was virtually impossible to sit at the tables without being tossed off the benches by the desperate rolling and pitching.

I was in a perfect frenzy over my films. They



had been stored in the hold, but I feared even there they could not be safe.

Finally I prevailed upon Captain Whitlam to let me investigate. When the storm abated a hatch was opened and down I went. The first moment I was horror-stricken at what I saw. The hold was flooded — my baggage must surely be water-logged! With trembling fingers I opened the film containers. A minute or two passed before I summoned courage to look at the films. Imagine my inexpressible joy when I found that they were apparently unharmed, due to the hermetically sealed containers in which they were packed.

*My Goal  
at last*

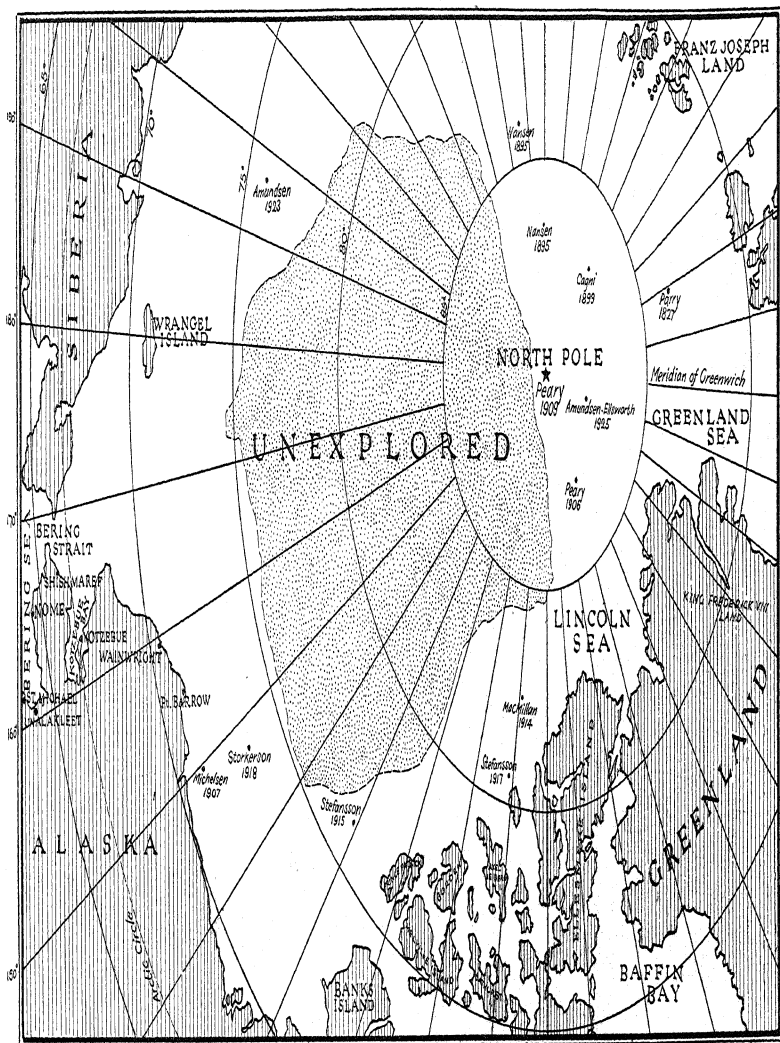
*September 7.* At one o'clock in the morning of this day the *Boxer* arrived off Point Barrow, the northernmost settlement of the American continent. I had reached my goal. I was thrilled at the thought of being within a thousand miles of the North Pole, and only eight hundred miles from that even more interesting spot, the Pole of Inaccessibility (or Ice Pole, for short) which is the centre of the floating Arctic sea ice and, therefore, the hardest spot in the Northern Hemisphere to reach. At Barrow much Arctic history has been made. Here early explorers

and scientists, whalers and soldiers of fortune had carved their names. Near here Captain Roald Amundsen and Lieutenant Oscar Ohmdal had recently prepared to take a final deep breath before jumping off to high adventure in their attempted flight across the Arctic to Spitzbergen. This was indeed the top of the world!

It is from Point Barrow that a million square miles of unexplored territory stretch on, surrounding the Pole of Inaccessibility. In this vast reach may lie that "Ultima Thule" of the Arctic explorer, some island, which, if found, will establish again a northward course of empire. For if there be land enough on which to establish an aeroplane base — a landing field for planes, or a mooring mast for dirigibles — four thousand miles would be stripped in the journey from the eastern American continent to Japan, and a trip from New York to Tokio could be made in two and a half days!

Furthermore a weather bureau station which might be established would enable the meteorologists to predict the weather and climatic conditions with speed and accuracy farther ahead than is now possible. While a radio station there would keep the Arctic within the realm of present-day life.

It was dark, but in the open roadstead I could see the vague outlines of two ships riding at



Courtesy of Photo Exchange, Inc.

## THE ARCTIC

Showing Pt. Barrow and the North



anchor—the *Duxbury* and the *Arctic*. The latter had just returned from a successful trading venture to the east of Barrow. Of the *Duxbury* more later.

I went to my cabin, but tossed all night, anxious for the dawn and a real look at the journey's end. By six o'clock I awoke, and rushed madly on deck to get a first glimpse of Barrow by daylight. I confess to being deeply disappointed. I had expected to see mountains of ice towering over valleys simply dotted with igloos, and Eskimos running wildly about with bows and arrows and harpoons. Instead I saw a group of wooden shanties and a couple of rather substantial looking buildings which later turned out to be the Presbyterian mission. I saw a few figures moving here and there, but they did not appear to be carrying the lethal weapons of the savage.

I returned below, depressed, gathered up a few of my personal belongings and my camera and climbed again to the deck. I wanted to get ashore in the first boat.

*Lopp:  
Hero of the  
Northland*

Lopp was already there, surrounded by natives and carrying on an animated conversation with

them in their own tongue. To them he was a hero — a god. He, of all men, had for many years been their savior, and he was well remembered though this was his first visit to the Point in fifteen years.

Dupertius had told me much of my friend when we passed Lopp Lagoon, not far from Nome. This lagoon was named for him after the winter of 1897 when he and three others had undertaken a perilous and novel expedition from Kotzebue Sound to Point Barrow, to succor members of a whaling fleet who had been caught in the ice and were popularly supposed to be starving and helpless.

The Government demanded that something be done to relieve the whalers. There was only one thing to do, and Lopp, with Captain Jarvis of the Coast Guard, and two other coast guardsmen, did it.

These four men traversed the Alaskan coast for seven hundred miles through frightful weather and unknown territory, and drove before them four hundred reindeer.

The task, after you have surveyed that route, seems impossible, but they accomplished it. Day after day they floundered through drifts to their knees; numbed with cold they fought icy, snow-laden, killing winds that blinded them and literally cut their clothing from them. And this,

remember, while they were constantly watching and driving the reindeer.

When they reached Point Barrow the herd had dwindled to less than a quarter of its original size — even the animals could not stand the punishment that these four heroic men had survived.

It is now well known that the “starving” whalers were enjoying plenty of game, besides imported food from well-supplied ships, and from the fully stocked Point Barrow trading post. But this fact does not in any way minimize the nobility of the men who came so gallantly to the rescue.

Of the reindeer brought in by Lopp at this time many escaped slaughter, owing to the poor-ness of their condition after the journey. These later became the nucleus of the reindeer industry of northern Alaska.

In connection with this industry Lopp has been of supreme service to the Eskimo, turning them from a nomad hunting race into a pastoral people. Many attempts had been made to establish the reindeer industry, but with such poor results that Secretary of the Interior Hitchcock called upon Lopp for a complete reorganization.

Lopp threw all his energy into the enterprise and devised a system of training native boys to be reindeer herders, which has been recognized by

many educators as one of the most interesting applications of educational processes to the fundamental needs of a primitive people ever recorded.

Under this system the native serves a four-year apprenticeship, and as his ability to care for the animals increases he receives gifts of reindeer from the herd. At the end of the course he is a competent herder, has a herd of his own, and is able to marry and take his place of responsibility in the community.

Lopp has fostered the idea of making the natives self-supporting through this medium. Today Alaska has over a half a million head of reindeer, and the natives are collectively worth some five million dollars.

The reindeer and Lopp have proved a salvation to the Eskimos. But Lopp's activities were never confined to business. He has labored among the natives as a friend, father, teacher and physician.

Twenty-eight years ago Lopp and his young bride came up into Alaska. His destination was Cape Prince of Wales, where there was a government school. This settlement, on the most westerly point of the continent, was a rough and wild one.

The municipal officials, knowing that Lopp was *en route*, had agreed to welcome him by un-



furling an American flag over the school buildings, if the town was peaceful. When his ship hove to off the Cape, no flag fluttered in the breeze. Everyone was fearful except Lopp. With his bride he landed and learned that a band of wild young Eskimos had just murdered the teacher in the little school. Undaunted, Lopp walked into the class-room, and in a moment had the situation in hand, where it has been for him ever since.

But to return to my landing. During the early morning many Eskimos had paddled the three miles from the shore to the *Boxer*, in their umiaks, or skin canoes, and had clambered aboard. I might have gone off in one of these. The ship's launch, however, was soon lowered and we set out for land, towing a umiak behind. As we approached the village we were transferred, bag and baggage, to this native craft, and then, caught with the rise of a passing wave, came sliding swiftly to shore on the crest of the surf.

A few Eskimos, mostly women and children, had gathered on the beach. A colorful congregation these were with their bright calicoes drawn over their fur garments. They hailed a welcome, and clustered about us, shouting excitedly "Lopp! Lopp!" and endeavoring to shake our hands.

Point Barrow is no metropolis. You can walk

around it and, without being abrupt, you may say "hello" to everybody in it in a quarter of an hour. We were soon on our way to the trading post. This resembled the typical country store of any frontier town. Through the open door I saw the glow of an old pot-bellied stove, and in a haze of tobacco smoke, perhaps a dozen roughly clad men who turned out to be the crew of the schooner *Arctic*. After weary months in frozen seas they were enjoying the luxury of swapping tales and smoking in utter content.

*The City  
Fathers*

Charlie Brower, ruddy and hearty, the resident owner-manager of the Cape Smythe Whaling and Trading Company, and its many stations, came forward in a moment to make the stranger welcome. Brower at sixty-two is deep through the chest, wide across the shoulders, and as hard as his own northern whalebone. He has been neighbor to the North Pole for forty-one years, with the Eskimo his clientele. His trading posts are recognized northern institutions, and so is Charlie himself.

More vitally important to me, however, was the man Jim Allen, whom I soon engaged in conversation. Lopp had told me about Allen,

implying that he needed to be handled with gloves. If he did not take a liking to me, or fancied I had come into the Northland to infringe upon his means of livelihood, he would not only disregard me, but might actually hamper my work. On the other hand he could be an excellent friend. If I met with his approval, he would readily induct me into the lore and customs of the Eskimos, which he knew as probably few others did.

Allen was recognized throughout the length and breadth of Alaska as a forceful character. Six feet two, about forty-eight years old, with brown hair liberally sprinkled with grey, and a clean-shaven face wrinkled by twenty-two years' contact with the rigors of Arctic sun and Arctic wind, he looked quite capable of making his will a law.

The trader seemed anxious for the company of one who had just come from civilization, while I was anxious for the company of those who knew the North, — so several hours passed rapidly. My new acquaintance talked surprisingly well and I apprehended the fact that he was a man who spent much time reading the few books and newspapers that reached him in this remote place.

Allen was going to Wainwright, an Eskimo village only ninety miles southwest of us, where he conducted the trading post for Brower, and

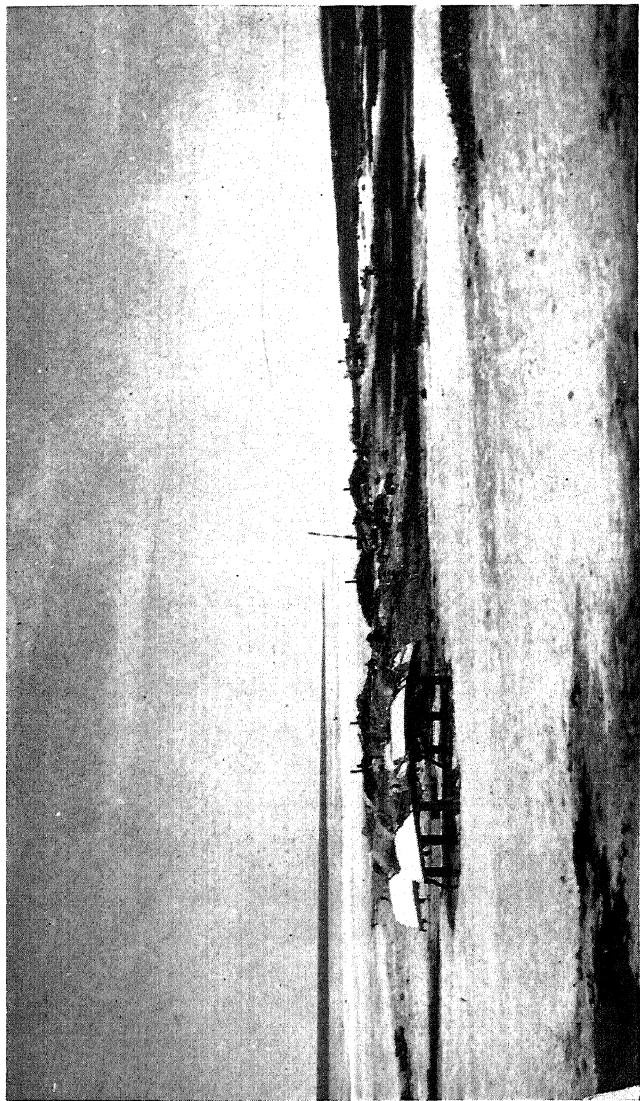
he persuaded me to go with him. I felt inclined to accept the invitation from the first, for he promised he would give me one of the greatest experiences of my career — a hunt on the ice, in the spring, for the elusive Bowhead whale, which, according to his strangely cultured language, was “the greatest of all mammals.” Of course I realized that besides the experience and the opportunity of getting a movie record of a whale hunt, and a shot at a polar bear, I would be with a man who knew the country and the natives. This last thought clinched the matter. Two days later I left for Wainwright aboard the *Boxer*, now on her return journey, while Jim preceded me on the *Arctic*, which was then bound for the “outside.”

“*Igloos*”

WAINWRIGHT.

*September 10.* My first glimpse of Wainwright completely satisfied me. Here was the “color” I had been seeking. Here was primitiveness, perhaps even savagery. I saw before me the most barbarous “village” on the American continent.

On flat, bare land, covered with a hard crust of snow and from which tiny frozen ponds gleamed, were grouped a score of squat “igloos.” This word has been wrongly limited in use. It is gen-



ESKIMO VILLAGE OF WAINWRIGHT



erally taken to mean the domelike snow houses built by the Victoria Island Eskimo, and other eastern tribes, but really signifies any shelter. A book set on edge partly open, thus forming an A-shaped space between its covers, might, in the Eskimo language, be correctly called an igloo. The homes here were built of turf over a framework of driftwood. They looked clumsy and unstable. But the natives erect them with an eye to permanency, and these squat affairs can weather the worst gales.

Contrary to popular belief the Alaskan Eskimo does not live in a snow house. It is this form of mud hut that is his "home sweet home." When he sets out on the trail and leaves his igloo for a prolonged stay, he carries on his sled a few willow boughs and some deer skins, and when bed time comes utilizes these to make a tent. If he ventures on the ice, or is caught in a storm on the trail, he may erect a snow house of sorts — an angular cabin-like affair. The natives in this district have long since lost the art of building the true dome-shaped Eskimo snow house, if they ever did possess that art.

I had no time to waste, for my supplies must be landed. A number of umiaks were drawn alongside the ship, and the goods swung into them, Knight checking off the items as they came out of the hold. The natives would paddle

as close as they could to shore, then climb into the water, waist deep, take big burdens on their backs, and wade out. The loads were flung on the beach, from where the Eskimo women and children carried them higher and piled them up.

On shore I met Jim Allen, who seemed unfeignedly glad to see me. He turned a shack over to me and the supplies were stored there.

I returned to the *Boxer* for my camera and personal equipment. I had hardly been aboard a minute, when, to my utter consternation, I heard her engines turn over. Before I could recover from my surprise the ship was under way and I was headed south. Dismayed to the point of rage, I stormed right royally, and between gesticulations and implorings managed to tell Captain Whitlam what I thought of the Arctic, the *Boxer*, the crew, and the act of heading me back to civilization without a word of warning.

The Captain listened gravely and when I had quite finished, told me dispassionately that there was no need for despair or excitement as the *Boxer* was going to drop anchor again only three miles away, at Wainwright Inlet, to take on lignite coal.

My relief can be imagined. When he further explained his course of action I felt ridiculous. Captain Whitlam pointed to the horizon. On the grey level lay a white line, like a chalk-line



on a slate. "That," said he, "is the 'ice blink,' and the reason why I am hurrying southward." Behind the "blink," I was told, lay the great polar ice pack, the vast array of cakes, or floes, that was steadily pushing south to engulf fool-hardy ships. Caught in this gigantic jam of ice, the *Boxer* would be crushed like a nut in a cracker.

After the hook was dropped at Wainwright Inlet, Lopp, Whitlam, and Knight accompanied me ashore. At Captain Roald Amundsen's cabin, a rude wooden affair, we bade each other farewell.

*A Care-free  
Soul*

I was alone in the Arctic!

Slowly I picked up my camera and threw it over my shoulder. A lump sprang in my throat. Would I ever see any of the old crowd again?

Dejectedly I started on the hike to Wainwright Village. I had gone but a few dispirited feet when I was confronted with the spectacle of Boxcar Slim.

That elongated gentleman was strolling towards me, a fatuous grin on his face, while his hands kept plunging into a bag and drawing out pieces of hard candy, which he chewed with gastronomic joy.

The contrast between myself and Slim was so

marked that I laughed aloud. Here was I, homesick, utterly downhearted, and beginning to fear that in spite of all my preparations I would never come alive out of this God-forsaken, frozen North, and there was Boxcar Slim, knowing no care, strolling along eating hard candy, innocent as a five-year old, while the *Boxer*, the only possible link between him and civilization, was at any moment about to depart, leaving him stranded and destitute!

Before I had a chance to say anything, Slim greeted me affectionately and proffered the candy bag. I grabbed a sweet, crying: "Slim, the last boat for the *Boxer* is leaving the beach in less than one minute!"

Boxcar looked at me, swallowed, stammered, let out a whoop, and then galvanized into action. His loose frame, gathered for the great effort, immediately unloosened into the most spectacular distance dash I have ever seen. His legs were so long he might have been wearing seven-league boots as he stretched them in the direction of the ship. His long arms pumped wildly. His balloon breeches flapped. I feared at any moment that he would become entangled in his trousers and be thrown for a heavy loss. And I wondered whether, as the sailor predicted, that beloved Windsor tie of his was going to "whip him to death." He ran so fast the wind of his exit

wound the tie around the back of his neck, where it fluttered like a flag on parade day.

Slim's race though not graceful was decidedly effective. Just as he reached the beach the *Boxer's* little boat began pulling away. Slim charged into the ocean, floundered knee deep, and dripping and frozen, clambered to safety. The last I saw of him was when he stood up to wave me goodbye. The exhibition lasted but a moment, for two sailors laid hands on him and dragged him down to prevent the boat from being overturned by the ardor of his adieu.

After Slim's record-breaking departure, the trip to Wainwright Village was uneventful save for the sudden appearance of a group of Eskimo children, who chattered incessantly behind me as I followed the beach north from Maudheim, Amundsen's shack, past Point Roald. At every other step I turned my head to catch a last glimpse of the ship. The youngsters grinned broadly as my face fell at sight of the *Boxer* disappearing on the horizon.

### *Northern Hospitality*

It was dusk when I arrived in the village. Its aspect struck me as uncanny. There were no lights, but on the gloomy plain I could see dimly the outlines of a few low huts. They reminded

me of tombstones. My spine tingled. The piteously doleful howls of dogs could be heard over the steady deep roar of a storm-maddened ocean. I struggled to keep my fears down, entered the eerie place, and soon was ensconced in my shack among my possessions.

I was putting things in order when a timid knock at the door interrupted my housekeeping. It was Alice, Allen's half-Eskimo daughter.

"Jim," she said, smiling, "he want you."

"When — now?" I asked.

"Jim, he want you," she repeated monotonously. I followed her to the trader's home.

"You want me, Jim?" I hailed as I entered.

"Sure! Want you for dinner. Be ready in a minute. Make yourself at home. Here, let me introduce you to my wife and family. 'Elinor, this is Mr. Rossman.'" I shook hands with his wife, and felt that she was going to be a good friend. "And this is Alice, my kiddie," he added. Alice glanced at me shyly with her beautiful brown eyes and ran away.

We sat down to a delicious meal of roast reindeer and "trimmings," prepared by Jim, which I enjoyed immensely. Jim combined the art of good cooking with that of good conversation, while his sense of humor was a delight.

"Shucks," thought I, "this Arctic stuff is going to be all right. What with Jim as a

friend, guide, and companion, and the rest of them to form a little family circle, the year will pass all too quickly!"

During the course of the meal I was bombarded with questions in Eskimo by Elinor — questions which Jim did not take the trouble to interpret. However, the meal was a huge success. My host even furnished cigars. After our repast we sauntered into another room of Jim's shack, which served as the "store."

Nothing much can be said of the store itself except that it seemed devoid of trade goods. Its most conspicuous item, like that at Brower's station, was the stove — throwing a mellow warmth to a few decrepit Eskimos, apparently idling within the sacred portals of the trader's post.

"Allapah pee-chuck!" grunted an old gnarled son of the tundra to Jim as we entered.

"Is that your Eskimo name, Jim?" I inquired timidly.

"Hell, no," he roared with laughter, "Ahtoyuk merely intimated that it was not cold here." "You see," continued Jim, "'allapah' is the Eskimo word for cold. 'Peechuk' means anything in the negative. But you'll find out soon enough from the natives the full meaning of the term 'pee-chuk.' They put it to many uses, and that isn't all. They have another expression

that won't tickle your ribs any; it's 'atchoo' or 'atchookee.' It means 'no,' or 'I don't know,' or 'I won't tell,' or 'It's none of your business.' "

How well I was to learn the full meaning of these terms later! I was trying to acquaint myself with this new language when the rude and dimly lighted room was suddenly startled by the sharp creaking sound of a door opening. The chill breath of the North swept through, and Upiksoun, Jim's brother-in-law, entered.

*Upiksoun —  
Amundsen's  
former Aid*

About five feet eight, in his early thirties and built like the Rock of Gibraltar, this was a burly Amerind. His face wreathed itself in smiles as he was boisterously greeted.

Upiksoun seemed a very popular fellow. With his entry came a sense of great good-fellowship. Known from Point Barrow to Nome as the best dog musher and trail-mate in the Arctic, he was also distinguished as the only one of his race to have flown in Captain Amundsen's aeroplane. The minute I shook hands with him I felt that we were going to be friends. It turned out that I was to learn much of the ways of the North from this happy native, though at

the time he did not readily accede to my overtures to engage his services by the year.

He evaded answers to my questions by repeating "Maybe bye 'm bye. I ask Jim. Maybe he no let me go. Alla time I like help you. Sure Jim no let me go."

Because he would have been invaluable, I pushed the matter, appealing to Jim. "Why can't Upiksoun work for me?" I asked, and got a straight answer.

"For the good and sufficient reason that he is in charge of the trading post for me at Icy Cape fifty miles below here. He and his family leave for there bag and baggage at the first snow-fall." That seemed final.

After dinner, I thanked Jim and rose to depart. The trader walked over to me and pulled at the cloth of my corduroy coat. "Son," he said and laughed a little bit, "when are you going to get yourself some real clothes, some furs?"

"Why," I asked, "do I need them right now?"

"You bet you do, and the quicker the better," the trader rejoined as he glanced deprecatingly at the clothes I was wearing. They consisted of the corduroy coat, trousers of the same material, a flannel shirt open at the throat, army puttees and brogues and cap. "That stuff you're wear-

ing now isn't any good at all for the weather up this way."

"Where can I get the proper clothes?" I asked.

"Well, I'll do you a favor. I'll sell you some skins," said Jim, as he departed for the rear of the store. He returned in a moment bearing a dozen reindeer skins over his arms. The skins were five dollars apiece. The trader explained that it took four skins to make the fur parka, the one-piece, hooded, Eskimo blouse, and that one whole skin was necessary to make each pair of boots, socks, and mittens. It took one or more skins to make the fur trousers, too.

As Jim dumped the skins into my arms I remarked that I wasn't any tailor.

"There's an old Eskimo woman in the igloo across the way who'll build you some garments," Jim said, urging me to see her the first thing in the morning. "You'd better hurry and have those clothes made, son," the trader warned.

I told Jim that I couldn't speak Eskimo and would have much difficulty in making my wants known to the tailoress.

"That's all right. Use the sign language," Jim directed as he said goodnight.

I walked across to my shack and by the feeble light of a tiny kerosene lamp I made the following notes in my diary:



"*Boxer* left today for the 'outside,' cutting me off from civilization. My first day in Wainwright. Met Alice, Elinor, Upiksoun. Had dinner with Jim. Bought skins. Night cold and clear. Frequent shooting stars. Dogs howling, ocean still roaring from rough weather. Wind whistling through the chinks in my slap-board shack. In a moment will roll up in blankets and sleep on the floor."

"*Maggie*" — *An  
Eskimo Tailor*

The next morning, after a breakfast of coffee and buckwheat cakes cooked on a small kerosene stove, I loaded my arms with skins and started out for the "tailor."

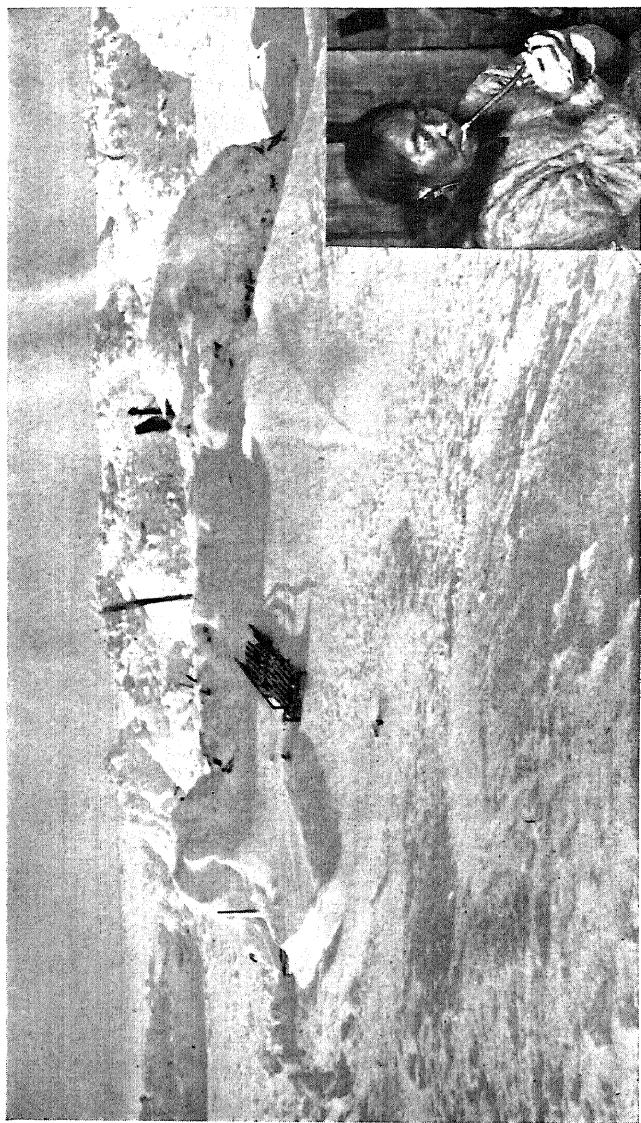
I found the squaw's igloo, stood in front of it and halloed lustily. There was no answer so I determined to enter. This sounds easy, but it wasn't. First I dropped the skins and got down on my hands and knees. Then I shoved the bundle of skins ahead of me into the narrow, low tunnel that leads to the igloo proper. I crawled forward but found the skins had blocked the passage. So I backed awkwardly out, retrieved the skins, and tried again, this time dragging them behind. The tunnel was dark, but I kept crawling. A dog, tied fast in the passageway,

barked and snapped at me. I bruised my knees and elbows on trap-doors set roughly in the tunnel floor. Cramped and aching but determined, I forged ahead — only to be confronted by another door. After several minutes of this mole-like procedure I managed to find my way in.

I was confronted with a most disgustingly sweet odor, and was almost forced to beat an inglorious retreat. However, I held my ground, pinched my nose between thumb and forefinger, and peered around.

The atrocious smell came from an iron pot in which a seal flipper was boiling. This is considered a great delicacy among the natives. Several skins lay on the floor but did not completely cover it, leaving large patches of cold ground quite bare. Some willow boughs, a harpoon, a litter of pups, and other odds and ends of Eskimo home life completed the furnishings.

An old woman squatted behind the offensive oil pot. She was naked to the waist, and looked like the grandmother of all the Eskimos. Her face had innumerable wrinkles. Her eyes were weak and watery. A pipe set between withered lips displayed flaccid gums as she puffed. Her teeth had literally been worn away from years and years of chewing reindeer skins — a most important process in her mode of tailoring.



MAGGIE'S IGLOO AND MAGGIE



The old woman showed no sign of surprise at my advent. She blinked heavily and blew out a cloud of smoke. For want of something to say I called "Hello." Her reply sounded like "Ugh."

I felt more or less a fool. I had a lot to say, but couldn't say it, and the old creature did not help me out—just sat there blinking. Presently I assumed her squatting position. Then I pointed to the skins and to my legs and feet.

I looked anxiously at "Maggie's" face. (I had dubbed her Maggie, finding I could not pronounce her true name as given me by Jim Allen.) The tailoress smiled understandingly. She reached for the skins with one hand, and with the other drew the pipe from her mouth and looked searchingly into its bowl. By her pained expression I judged she was intimating that there was little tobacco left. Anxious to please, I pulled out my pouch, intending to sprinkle a generous pipe-load for the old soul. But Maggie's skinny arm flashed out, her talon fingers pounced on the bag, and she transferred it to her own possession. This was done with so much assurance that I had not the moral strength to protest.

I continued a dramatic description of the clothing wanted. Maggie took in my gesticulations, grunted once more, and then lifted one of

the skins and rubbed it fiercely, looking up at me. I was completely at a loss to understand her, and afraid we should never get on. I was becoming physically uncomfortable, so I attempted to leave. But as I arose, my boot-maker grabbed me firmly by the ankle and set my foot down on one of the skins. Then with a piece of charcoal she followed the outline of my shoe. This was the only measurement Maggie took.

My foot released, I turned once more to leave. This time I had in my hand a piece of chewing tobacco which I was about to bite into, but there's many a slip 'twixt the plug and the lip. Maggie's hands were quicker than mine. One lunge — and again she had transferred my possession to her own keeping.

As she snatched the plug she said "Ko-yo-nok." I said the same thing, and left hurriedly, fearing that she might grab off my shirt or my breeches before I got out. "Koyunok," I learned later, means "Thank you," but I was glad enough then to mistake it for "Goodbye!"

With the odor of seal oil still lingering about me I went over to Jim's and told him of my difficulties. He roared with laughter. After he quieted down I remarked that I was trusting to luck, because Maggie had taken no other measurement except the one of my foot. "Don't worry, boy," Jim laughed, explaining that Mag-

gie's weary old eyes were just as precise at measuring as were several tapes and rules. "Every Eskimo in the village has a precise knowledge of every one of your personal peculiarities in walking, the swinging of your arms, and so forth, and they know to a nicety just how you place your feet and slouch your shoulders when you stand still," the trader added.

I was skeptical, but Jim said the Eskimos, like other primitive people, are highly imitative, and that they have only to look at a man a few moments to be able to register his height and weight indelibly.

"How long is it going to take to make these clothes?" I asked. Jim said that first the skins must be tanned and that was what Maggie meant when she rubbed them. He advised me to buy some reindeer sinew and despatch the supply by a native boy to Maggie. After the tanning, Jim said, Maggie would cut and shape the skins with an ivory-handled crescent-shaped steel blade. "In a couple of weeks Maggie will come around with the socks, then the boots, and finally the trousers and the parka. And you'll be surprised how well they'll fit."

He then asked me how I had slept and I told him I had spent a very unpleasant night on the floor.

"Well, we'll fix that up. Your friend Lopp

has been looking out for you, because I noticed some bed springs among that stuff of yours the natives hauled from the beach and piled up by your cabin."

*"Settling Down"*  
*in my*  
*Alaskan Home*

We walked over to my shack. There was the bed spring. Jim helped me gather some wood and we fashioned supports for the springs so that they stood about a foot off the floor. I spread some skins for a mattress and in a few moments had a really comfortable bed.

Next, I went back to the trader's and bought a real coal-burning stove, and other necessities. I borrowed a table and some knives and forks and also purchased coal at one dollar a sack. There is coal ten miles back of Wainwright; in the Spring the natives set out for the region with sleds and return with fuel. This they barter with Jim for staples, so that he had a plentiful supply of coal. The coal, by the way, is a low grade lignite.

While I was setting up the stove, Angushuk, an old native, very fat and bald, waddled in with a rickety chair. He set it down and went out smiling. When I told Jim of the gift he said it was probably not a gift, as the chair had cost



Angushuk quite a bit and he would, no doubt, charge me rental. Years ago, Jim said, Angushuk bought the chair for twelve fox skins from a trading ship. In twelve years this trader had returned as many times, and each time collected another fox skin from Angushuk. The Eskimo protested firmly against purchase on this kind of installment plan, nevertheless the trader always departed with another hide.

On this same afternoon Jim told me some Eskimo tales and taught me a few native words. I noted them in my diary with the sinking thought that out of such fragments I must form my vocabulary as a moving picture director, and realized how much, how very much, lay between me and the good old reliable "Shoot!"

This was my first lesson:

ilowit — you

avunga — me

kakoogo — when

kina — who

soona — what

suwatta — why

atchukee — I don't know, or anything in the  
negative

arrega — anything that is satisfactory

tubra — hurry up

alapah — cold

nakuruk — very good

That night while I was completing the arrangements of my cabin, I received an unexpected visitor — Kagmuk, a smiling, rather tall Eskimo who looked very intelligent. Jim told me later that Kagmuk was much esteemed by the villagers for his native wisdom and hunting prowess. Originally he came from the coast east of Barrow. I noticed two holes through his lower lip. Like most of the natives he had once decorated himself by piercing holes in the lower lip and plugging them with bits of ivory or jade. These ornaments are called labrets. The custom has been discontinued for some time.

Kagmuk stood in the cabin door, pointed at me and said "Ilowit." I sensed the purpose of his visit. He wanted to be my tutor. So I pointed to various articles about the room and Kagmuk gave me the Eskimo equivalents for them, all of which I carefully noted.

After an hour or so of this I grew tired and sleepy and wanted to dismiss him but was dismayed when I thought that I wouldn't know how to tell him to leave. I attempted it in this fashion. I opened the door and said, "Home, Home," urging the teacher out with my hands. But Kagmuk failed to comprehend. Then I turned, stretched, and pointed to my bunk. He did not get it. With the door still open, I gently pushed him towards it and said "Igloo, Igloo."

Kagmuk understood this time, and, still smiling, left.

For several days I did little but inspect and clean my photographic equipment and wait upon some curious deputations of natives. One morning Kagmuk again appeared, bearing a seal liver for me. It positively reeked and oil dripped heavily from it. However, I had no wish to hurt Kagmuk's feelings so I determined to eat a piece. I washed it several times and put it in a frying pan. After a deep frying, I gingerly placed a portion of it in my mouth and found it really hadn't a half-bad flavor. Kagmuk seemed highly honored and pleased that his gift met with satisfaction.

*An Eskimo*  
"once over"

The same night while I was recording my experiences in my diary, the door opened and in walked Kagmuk followed by half a dozen other natives, all of them old. I glanced up in surprise, but they paid no attention, and without a word filed in and sat down, with their backs against the wall.

I felt that my cue was not to bother them until they wanted to be bothered. So I kept on with my work. They were silent for a few moments, and then broke into a chatter among themselves.

I seemingly paid no attention. They watched intently while I brewed some coffee.

There were two tin cups in my shack. These I filled, and then resorted to some empty milk tins for cups for the remainder of my guests. I permitted them plenty of sugar with the coffee. The treat made a hit. I realized that I was being given the Eskimo "once over" and that if I did something that didn't fit in with their ideas of how I should act, I should be "out of luck" when I started to make my pictures.

Having consumed my coffee, the deputation filed out and left me wondering. When I saw Jim in the morning he explained that the deputation comprised the village elders, who formed the Council, and that I might expect another visitation. He was right. The next time they came they filed in and observed the same quiet. I racked my brains for some way in which to entertain them and finally thought of a few magazines I had with me. I gravely passed them about to the "wall-flowers" who began instantly thumbing them.

The next moment gurgles of delight, surprise, and wonder were heard. The men put their heads together and jabbered, and pointed excitedly at the brightly-colored advertisements. They motioned to me and I went over to look. What particularly amused or awed them were

the advertisements for underclothing. These "ads," showing ladies and gentlemen sitting about garbed only in union suits and garters, sometimes make even American readers smile. The Eskimos simply shrieked. I read their thoughts in their faces. They imagined that white men and women really went around in their B. V. D.'s and little "undies."

An advertisement for a straw hat also aroused much comment. As an impractical headgear this surely could not be outdone. What queer customs the white people had!

*The "Pleasures" of  
Digging In*

*September 20.* Today I received the first intimation that winter was settling about us. It began to snow. A cold wind rolled angry surf high up on the beach. Large flocks of birds, geese, duck and gulls flew south along the shore. They travelled low, searching for food.

There was a bustle among the Eskimos. Skin tents were pulled down, the tribesmen quitting them for the more substantial and warmer shelters. Several of the men left the village hoping to catch a seal or walrus. The Eskimos' dogs, tied to stakes about the houses, shivered and whined, and as the day grew colder got closer to

the ground, huddled behind little knolls and in depressions — anywhere a wind-break offered.

The caches and racks where the natives kept supplies, and hung meat and fish to dry, were being stripped, and much of their contents carried indoors. The numerous ponds about Wainwright were frozen, and it was necessary to melt snow for water. It is almost a paradox that in this land of long winters and much ice there should be so little water. But fuel is difficult to get, and without heat the snow and ice cannot be melted.

I now experienced the "Arctic bath" with its attendant pleasures! I melted snow in a basin on the stove, stripped, took cloth and soap and scrubbed myself. The bath was very hot at starting, but the low temperature destroyed its heat in a few seconds, and during the final stages I was forced to use ice-cold water.

I prided myself on this as a necessary hardship, and almost felt heroic in being clean. But after my return to the United States I was moved to tell the sad experience to an old lady who had seen pioneer times in Dakota. She laughed heartily, asked me why I didn't leave the water heating while I bathed, and went on to tell of the many mornings she had washed her breakfast dishes with her dishpan on the stove, a roaring fire underneath boiling the water up as fast

as the chilly plates and cups toned it down. Of course my poor masculine wits were too dumb for this solution. It takes a woman to triumph over domestic difficulties!

This unfavorable weather caused postponement of the walrus hunt on which Jim had invited me, and although I regretted missing the experience, I was rather thankful, because one of my teeth was troubling me. At first it twinged and ached spasmodically and I thought its antics would not last long. But as the weather grew colder the tooth grew bolder and it soon gave evidence that it intended to battle with me all winter. The pain became monotonous and then almost unbearable. My jaw swelled and I was forced to keep to my cabin. Hot applications proved futile. Jim came over to my shack one day and saw how miserable I was. After inspecting the tooth he decided it had to be yanked. While he returned to his store for the forceps, I began to ponder on my last visit to the dentist — which was shortly before the start of my trip. The dentist had assured me that he was a past master in the art and science of tooth-drawing. I agreed that his mastership was “past” when he broke my tooth, and then worked several hours extricating the roots.

By the time Jim returned I had fooled myself into believing that the present ache was swiftly

vanishing. And when I saw the "forceps," I was absolutely certain that the tooth did not ache at all. Jim's forceps were a pair of huge, ancient, dirty and rusty pliers. "It's all right now, Jim, the pain has stopped," I lied, trusting that Jim would believe my open, frank countenance. "No you don't, young man. That tooth has got to come out and I'm going to take it out," Jim asserted as he threw me back on the bed. Any answer that was in my mind found no utterance because my mouth was suddenly filled with Jim's fingers and his pliers.

With a sinking sensation I felt the pliers grip the tormenting tooth. Yank! A wave of red-hot pain, sweet cessation, and my troubles were over! Jim, with his barbarous implement, had pulled the tooth cleanly, an accomplishment at which my New York dentist, with all his new-fangled instruments, had failed miserably.

Every man his own doctor, dentist, architect, chore-boy, butcher, baker and candlestick maker, is the rule of the Far North. The women do their full share, also. Besides cooking and making clothes, many of them take a hand in hunting. One day a team came to Jim's post with two dogs pulling it and an aged Eskimo woman hitched on as the lead animal. Her old husband was in the rear, pushing the sled. The snow had not packed on the ground yet and it



was hard going, but the woman nevertheless made no fuss about the work. When her husband went into the Post for supplies, with the harness remaining across her shoulders, she sat down on the sled, took a pipe from her boot, and smoked complacently.

Such scenes as these offered me good material for my camera. Even during the stormy days I made studies of husky dogs, and filmed some of the natives. But the sun's arc decreased perceptibly. Long, faint shadows were thrown over the tundra as the days grew shorter. On clear nights there was an occasional aurora, but they were too faint to photograph. The time was rapidly approaching when the sun would set, not to rise again for many weeks.

The village elders no longer called for inspections, but Kagmuk came to visit me frequently. He told me he was keeping an Eskimo diary of my trip and would present me with the complete journal when my work was finished.

One day there was a low rap on my cabin door and it opened to reveal, Maggie, "the tailor," and a chubby Eskimo girl about fourteen years old, with coarse black hair and wind-reddened cheeks. The two came in stamping their boots and shaking snow off their furs.

I said "Hello, Maggie" and she replied with a grunt and sat down on the floor. The girl

shyly followed her example. Then Maggie undid the bundle she was carrying, revealing the clothes that were to make me an Eskimo Beau Brummel. She handed me the fur mittens. I slipped them on. They fitted and I exclaimed "Ar-re-ga" (satisfactory). Maggie's face took on an expression of heart-felt delight and she beamed proudly on her companion. Then came the fur socks. "Na-ku-ruk" (very good), I remarked. Maggie was rapturous and she rocked back and forth with joy. Next I put on the skin trousers over my corduroy pair. I got into them without trouble. Then I tried on the parka, or hooded garment. It hung loosely, but I found later that it was a perfect fit. The Eskimos wear their parkas wide and loose, so that during excessive cold they can withdraw their arms from the sleeves and hold their hands against their chests underneath the garment. In this way numb fingers are quickly warmed.

While I was trying on the boots, the Eskimo girl glanced almost pleadingly at me and when I again said "arrega" she also fell into one of the transports of delight which were so visibly affecting Maggie. I was puzzled at the girl's interest but I learned later that she was really the boot-maker. Maggie's teeth were so worn that after she cut the skins to the shape of my foot, she sent the soles to her girl companion. It was her

young teeth that chewed and crimped and shaped my boots.

After the successful fitting, Maggie and the girl showed no signs of wanting to leave. So I just let them sit there. Maggie drew out her pipe, scrutinized the empty bowl carefully, sighed and looked at me. I apparently paid no attention. Then she thrust the pipe under her companion's eyes as if to ask confirmation of the fact that it was empty. She followed this by sighing loudly, and I made a motion toward my back pocket where I kept a tobacco pouch.

I took the pipe from Maggie's hand principally to examine it. The bowl, a small one, was fashioned from a walrus tooth, and to plug it up, where the drilling had cracked it, an empty brass cartridge had been inserted. The wooden stem fitted into the bowl with another cartridge piece. The natives highly prize the cartridge shells, and whenever Jim and I fired rifles they quickly salvaged the brass.

As I filled the small bowl Maggie only looked slightly satisfied, so I surrendered to the inevitable and handed her out a full tin. She nodded a dignified thanks. Feeling I was slighting her companion, I handed the girl a package of chewing gum. Her eyes opened wide. "Five pieces of gum at one time, how can you be so good to me!" they seemed to say.

Wherewith, for a few moments, there was nothing to be heard but the puffing of Maggie's pipe and the furious chewing and smacking of gum, lacerated by teeth that had chewed leather into a boot!

Maggie suddenly launched a stream of words at me. Of course I didn't understand her, but she seemed to expect an answer. So I simulated surprise with my eye-brows and remarked: "You don't say so?" Maggie understood me no better; still, she was delighted at the prospect of a conversation, even an unintelligible conversation, senseless as the talk Alice heard in Wonderland. She burst forth with another rush of sound.

I thought I caught several words referring to the warmth of my new garments, and I replied with a graceful speech in praise of her work. For about five minutes we jabbered back and forth, her host paying her the most fulsome compliments. Imagine my chagrin when I learned later that the lady's conversation really had had to do with affairs in the village, with the fact that starvation days were near, and that she was a member of the village council.

Maggie embarrassed me as did Kagmuk. I was at a loss to know how to ask her to leave. She settled my doubts in a short while, however, by grunting, then departing with her companion.

*The Manna in  
the Wilderness*

In the morning the weather began to clear, but I was anxious to give my new clothes the practical test of wear, and so went over to Jim's, completely befurred. The trader put his hands on his hips and eyed me critically, while I turned slowly, parading to and fro like a mannequin.

"Well, that's not so bad, boy, but you ought to know how to lace a pair of boots," was Jim's comment.

I glanced down at my feet conscious that they were very cold despite the skins. My friend explained that the seal-skin sole is thin, though tough, and is made more for wear than for warmth. He further advised me to insert unravelled rope, or coiled reindeer hair between sole and sock to keep my feet cosy.

While I was absorbing all of Jim's exclusive fashion hints, a clamor arose in the village. The snow had ceased and all the natives were hurrying toward the beach.

"Get your camera and follow me. This will be worth while to you," Jim called.

I asked no questions but hurried to my cabin for the camera.

I followed the trail along the beach two miles to where the Eskimos, men, women and children,

were scurrying about digging in the sand. At first I thought they were gathering shell-fish, but it soon developed that their prize was coal.

Science has not yet satisfactorily explained the God-given fuel — beach coal — which appears as by a miracle in this vicinity, thrown up on shore after a storm. The phenomenon does not occur anywhere else along the Arctic coast. It is supposed that there are strata of coal on the ocean-bottom a short distance out.

It is really a tremendous boon to these natives since they can thus secure fuel with comparatively little toil. On other parts of the northwest coast of Alaska the Eskimos burn blubber and oil from the fats of animals, for which they have to hunt. Wood is scarce throughout the coast districts for there are no trees except an occasional stunted willow.

The natives, however, are not prone to ponder the mysterious working of God in performing miracles. They hurried around and soon had a large quantity of the coal piled on sledges and tied in sacks. Some scraped away the ice and snow to get the coal, which ranges from pea size to choice bits as large as two-pound slabs of butter. Others, working closer to the waves, dug holes in the beach with horn scoops. They retreated while a comber broke in and ran over the hole, and then "fell to" again. When the

wave receded I found it had deposited coal in the holes.

Occasionally a native would find a precious piece of drift-wood, and stagger joyfully up the beach with a heavy log on his back. Such a log, or any piece of wood, in fact, is a veritable treasure. It is hoarded to be used in making sledges and boats, or in building houses.

After examining some of the coal, which is hard, black, and polished to a fine degree by the waves, I used my camera to advantage, obtaining one of my first records of the many strange things to be found in the Arctic.

### *Finding an Eskimo Heroine*

There was one Eskimo woman on the beach who stood out above the others because of her native beauty and her activities. She was here, there, and everywhere, lending a hand to this one and that one, giving directions, taking care of the children, and seeming to be a general supervisor. Her dark eyes danced and her hair was beautifully black although it possessed the usual Eskimo coarseness. Her hands were deft and she moved with a certain rude grace which was apparent enough despite her clumsy garments and her short stature.

I summoned enough of the Eskimo tongue to be able to ask her name. "Kiv-a-li-na," I was told. I walked over to her. She smiled and appeared to be very friendly. But all attempts to take her picture were failures. Every time I got my camera in position and pointed it at her she would turn her back to me. I realized that by craft I should be able, later, to snap her when she wasn't looking, but if she did by any chance catch me I should arouse her hostility. What I must do, therefore, first of all, was to create among the natives friendship for myself. I wanted them to trust me implicitly. So I left "Kivalina" alone and turned my attention to studying the other natives. When it was time to leave I noticed that many left their bags of coal on the beach. This they could do with perfect safety as theft is unknown among the natives. I was to see later, nevertheless, that even the small contact they had experienced with white men had made some of them avaricious when dealing with strangers.

Meanwhile the wind had shifted, driving sentinels of the polar pack southward. These were drifting by the coast at Wainwright and for hours I watched them — huge floes with opalescent hues of many colors flashing and gleaming in the sunlight.



*Getting Ready  
for the  
Walrus Hunt*

The weather now permitted the proposed walrus hunt with Jim. We embarked in an umiak about thirty feet long. This boat was constructed without a nail. It was made of driftwood and of the skins of the "ugruk" or bearded seal. The driftwood was fastened together with thongs. Seven ugruk skins sewn together with thongs and tightly stretched over the driftwood-frame formed the body of the large canoe. Sometimes an umiak is made of walrus hide. In such cases it requires only three skins, because the walrus is larger than the ugruk which weighs about 1000 pounds. The ugruk boat has great advantages in the Arctic; in fact is far more useful in the ice than would be a boat of solid construction.

Seal skin is resilient and light. In an umiak there is little danger of puncturing the side when in collision with an iceberg because the hide bounces off the ice whereas the sides of a wooden boat would most likely be crushed and sink.

If by any chance the skin boat is punctured it is easily mended. Being very light, it can be hauled up on the ice and from his skin garments

an Eskimo can cut a patch and sew it over a hole without losing much time.

The umiak holds about ten people and at its widest point is generally seven feet. The paddles vary in size and weight, each Eskimo making his own from driftwood.

Jim and I took along our rifles, and with an Eskimo crew paddled out to the edge of the pack. But there wasn't a walrus to be seen. We returned at sunset in a gorgeous burst of color when the sun's rays were visible in reverse formation on the northern horizon.

The next day brought an experience which Jim said fell very rarely to a white man in the Arctic at that time of the year. We made a canoe trip to Icy Cape, a distance of fifty-two miles.

The purpose of the trip was to escort Upiksoun, Jim's brother-in-law, to the Cape where he would take charge of Jim's trading station. We had two canoes, Jim and I and a native crew in one, and Upiksoun, his wife, friends, children, dogs, sledge and other supplies, in the second boat.

We paddled briskly and at twilight made the Cape where Jim gave final instructions to Upiksoun. We had coffee on the beach, and leaving the native and his family we started back.

The high-spot of the entire trip was the moon-

rise. At first a hazy, shapeless glow of soft orange light lay on the horizon. The orange haze slowly took on shape. It appeared like a lantern. Then this changed and in a few moments a mellow Arctic moon hung in the heavens, and Jim and I paddled through a path of soft and shimmering gold.

I suffered from the frost and could not manage to keep my hands and feet warm. Even the native boots failed to protect my feet since these were resting on the skin bottom of the boat which was touching the icy water. I paddled vigorously to heighten circulation but the cold was numbing and I began really to suffer as I grew tired. My eyes hurt from strain. On the down trip, Jim had pointed out the landmarks, telling me of the stories connected with that part of the coast. The flatness and monotony of the land made my eyes weary.

When we got back to Wainwright we had paddled 104 miles in 26 hours and I was exhausted. The moment I got into bed I fell into that deep dreamless sleep that is always produced by extreme fatigue.

*Photographing  
the Storm*

Twelve hours later I awoke to find a howling blizzard. I opened the door and a blast of wind

and snow nearly knocked me down. It was impossible to see ten feet ahead. The snow falling was made the more unpleasant by the snow that had packed the ground during the previous storm. This snow now swirled off the ground and blew about with needle-like sharpness, cutting one's face.

I had no desire to be interned in my cabin all day so I foolishly set out for Jim's. I thought I had been cold the night before but it was nothing compared to the cold I suffered traversing that hundred yards to Jim's place. The pelting snow seemed to rip right through my fur clothing. I couldn't see. I closed my eyes and my eyelids felt as if they were being pricked by innumerable daggers. The snow piled knee deep. I was forced to trust my sense of distance and direction as I floundered on blindly.

Suddenly I felt that I had gone too far. I didn't know why, but a sixth sense told me so. I turned and looked back. A terrific gust cleaved the snow for a second and through the space I saw a dim outline. I walked towards it and in a few moments was safe at Jim's.

After I was fairly warm, I told Jim that I wanted to go out in the blizzard again and get some pictures. The trader threw up his hands in dismay and pronounced it foolhardy in the extreme; I told him it was absolutely necessary,

however, as I intended to return to civilization with films showing all phases of the Arctic. Jim grumbled at what he termed "Damfoolishness," nevertheless he called to Tukuluk, the sixteen-year-old native who helped him in the store, and explained to him that I wanted a guide and interpreter.

So, guided by Tukuluk, I floundered back to my cabin. The boy slept there that night. In the morning, the blizzard had not abated but the air was not so thick with snow and I determined to go into the village and record pictures of life there during a storm.

Tukuluk was surprisingly intelligent and sensed exactly what I wanted. Since the sun stayed but two hours in the sky at this time, I had to work fast. Blinded frequently by the driving snow, my eyelashes froze together from time to time as I tried to focus the camera, with fingers and feet numb. I worked until one o'clock in the afternoon when the sun set! Photographing was slow and difficult. The constantly driving snow seeped into every crack and crevice of the camera. The lenses at times became so packed with snow as to make them utterly useless and I was obliged then to stop photographing and with cold-stiffened fingers carefully to dig out the snow.

But I needed storm scenes for my film story

and the only way to have them was to go and get them.

I obtained some striking pictures of the husky dogs burrowing into deep drifts, huddled together, lifting their frozen muzzles into the air, and howling out their protest against such discomfort. The Eskimos sat tight in their igloos, only emerging when it was necessary to feed the dogs or to secure some equipment. They were amazed to find me outside, and I'm sure they thought I was completely crazy to leave my cozy cabin and wade around in a blizzard with a "box."

The storm raged for three days and then stopped as abruptly as it had arisen. One day I obtained a beautiful picture of an Arctic rainbow, gloriously vivid in an immense wide arc of colors. I went down to the beach to record it, and photographed an Eskimo while he was passing with his dog-team framed by the gorgeous curve.

### *The Freezing Sea*

Suddenly, without warning, the temperature began to drop. The air was so clear and cold you could almost hear it crackle.

The ocean became filled with millions of particles of gleaming ice. And I initiated an effort

to film the actual freezing of the ocean, which if successful would be the first time it ever had been done. I was determined to go through with it as I realized how novel and instructive a picture this would make.

In a few days the ocean became a mass of gently heaving mush, and rolled in slow, writhing waves on to the beach. Succeeding waves pushed this mush ice higher and higher ashore while the ocean continued to heave and surge.

I slung my camera over my shoulder and went down to the beach and waded knee-deep through the piled-up mush ice. I planted my camera, and immediately the tripod sank through to its hilt. Only the box of my apparatus remained above the slushy mass. Thus I recorded the first stage of the freezing of the Arctic Ocean.

Later, walking along the frozen beach with the camera and tripod over my shoulder, I slipped and fell. This mishap nearly put an end to my entire expedition. I fell on top of the camera. For a moment I was stunned, not by the force of my fall, but by the thought that my camera had probably been damaged. My expressions were unprintable! At first I was actually afraid to examine the camera, but summoning courage I found that the crank handle had been smashed in against the case. To my joyous relief the frame box had not been broken open.

I hurried back to my cabin and went over the camera carefully. As far as I could see the mechanism had not been injured, nor had light penetrated to the films that had recorded the freezing ocean. Even a ray of light would of course have ruined them. I carried an extra crank handle and so was able to make repairs and have everything in readiness to photograph the next stage of the freezing.

This occurred several days later. Small circular patches of ice now began to form over the entire ocean as far as the eye could see. Rapidly increasing in size and known as "pancake ice," these little projections sailed briskly along. All this I duly recorded with the camera.

The next development was when the "pancake" ice became floes. The wind and the terrific pressure from the polar pack behind those floes pushed them together with great force and they froze, forming long wide sheets of ice. In turn these were pushed together until finally the Arctic Ocean was completely crusted over. No water could be seen. Over the sea lay a solid sheet of ice.

But the pressure from behind increased, for the wind was blowing shoreward. The vast sheet of ice began to surge up on the coast. The pressure continued. The ice groaned and crashed and crunched. In confusion it jammed and



smashed about, piling up huge, irregular masses on the shore.

And still the ice behind came toppling in, millions of tons of it, all in titanic labor! The roar and noise were deafening.

The dome of the ocean buckled up in frigid fury. And soon along the beach there lay the "pressure ridge" — a barrier, a wall, a hill, a mountain range of ice, hundreds of miles long, and in some places three hundred feet high!

The God of the North had completed his work. And I had caught him in the act!

*Hunting a  
"Cast" in Alaska*

A day's rest followed this effort, and then I went over to Jim's. I told him, for the first time, of my plans to obtain a motion picture story using the natives entirely in the cast; that I wanted to go out of the North with a minute film record of the normal lives of the Eskimos during every part of the year and that to do this it was necessary to have his help.

I particularly required the services of a certain number of Eskimos for a long period so that the photographed characters would be the same all through the picture. I was willing, I said, to pay a reasonable sum for the work.

Jim hemmed and hawed. "Look here, Earl, if you keep giving these Eskimos things and holding them in such high value that they become accustomed to that manner, you'll absolutely spoil them and I won't be able to do a thing with them myself." He shook his head dubiously. And it was only after an urgent plea from me that he consented to help.

I told him I wanted first to find a "leading man." "All right," said my friend, and he escorted me to the little village, "In here," Jim directed, pointing his finger to a large house. We crawled through the tunnel.

Indoors were six people, five men and one woman, all naked to the waist. Four of them, old men, were sitting apart. The old woman was squatted next to a handsome young man whose beautifully muscled body and powerful arms were exposed. His forehead was high and his whole appearance stamped him as a superior Eskimo.

In his hand he held a wooden mallet with which he was pounding to pieces a little mound of bones at his feet. "Hello, Ag-u-va-luk," hailed Jim. The man replied "Hello" and kept on pounding the bones.

The old woman beside him scooped up a handful of the stuff which she dumped into a pot boiling over a fire. "What's all that about?"

I asked Jim. "Marrow soup. Nothing wasted in this country," he explained. The old woman dipped a bowl into the pot, drank from it and then passed it to Jim. He declined the honor. So did I. Soup made from the bones of reindeer and polar bear probably tasted excellently to the natives.

Then Jim launched into a long conversation with Aguvaluk, who had been waiting for us to start the pow-wow. I felt extremely anxious to obtain the man as my leading character after Jim told me he was the sweetheart of Kivalina, the beautiful Eskimo girl whom I encountered during the coal collecting on the beach.

I believed Jim's misgivings about my picture-making had worn away by this time and he seemed proud to be able to help. He told Aguvaluk that I wanted to hire him for a year, with the understanding that he would prevail upon his sweetheart to work for me, too.

While Jim was presenting the scheme, I looked about the igloo. It was well kept. Aguvaluk did not sleep on the floor like other natives, but had fashioned for himself a bunk which stood about a foot above the ground. The four old men in the corner seemed irritated by the interruption. They looked first at Jim and then at me, laughing in a harsh way, and the Eskimos have an almost insulting laugh at times.

They firmly believe that they are the white man's superior. The Eskimo's spirit and his belief in himself are unconquerable.

When laughter at the white man failed to amuse them any longer, one of these old fellows produced a deck of the greasiest, dirtiest cards I have ever seen, and the company started to play — whist! I was dumbfounded. Here in this crudest of dwellings, on an Arctic shore, and in an uncivilized world, to see Eskimos play whist! It was almost unbelievable!

I was further amazed to find each of the four testy old gentlemen playing an excellent game. They called out the score in Eskimo and when a decisive point was made, one of them would laugh gleefully in a little, spiteful triumph. The score was kept on a piece of perforated ivory, ivory pegs being inserted in the holes as markers.

I had been watching them for some time when I noticed that Jim and Aguvaluk had stopped jabbering. The native was deep in thought. Then he looked up at me and said, "How much?"

Having no idea what would be proper pay for my intended leading man, I shrugged my shoulders and replied in Eskimo, "Atchookee" (I don't know). Then I asked Jim to question Aguvaluk and ascertain what he thought fair.

The upshot of it was that Aguvaluk promised

to work for me as long as I needed him on the condition that I provided him with food and gave him "presents." I agreed. Jim smiled.

*The Leading Man  
Comes High*

I little knew then what I had done. In providing food for the Eskimo I was also providing food for nearly the entire village! The Eskimos are the most communistic of all races and the most improvident. When a friend enters the home of a native the friend does not leave until he has glutted himself with food. That is an unwritten, but always an unbroken, law. As long as there is food in any house no one ever goes hungry.

Later, when the other natives learned of the agreement, they swarmed into Aguvaluk's home to get food. I also had an agreement with Jim whereby he would give Aguvaluk food on vouchers that I would sign. These vouchers soon became a bona fide medium of currency in the village!

However, I did not know all this at the time the verbal contract was made, so I was quite pleased with myself when Jim and I crawled outdoors.

*"Cowboys" of  
of the North*

When we emerged I found the whole village was noisy with a new activity. The natives were preparing for the annual reindeer roundup and rodeo. There were thousands of the animals in sight. Natives were driving them over a ridge about a mile away, in back of which lay a lake. The lake was now frozen. There wasn't an idle Eskimo in Wainwright.

Jim told me the roundup had been going on for several days but that most of it was taking place behind the ridge and for that reason I hadn't seen it.

I hurried over to my cabin for the camera and was quickly over the ridge to the roundup on the ice. The scene was as picturesque as the great roundups of cattle in America's West.

The natives, with lassos made of walrus thong, were running and yelling and deftly throwing the "rope." Reindeer thus caught fell grunting and kicking on the slippery ice. Some of the natives were marking the beasts and a few were butchering them. At this stage the women took hand in the roundup. They skinned the animals and carried them back to the village by dog-sled and put the meat in the caches.

There was one native who seemed to be in

great demand. He was running here and there and everywhere and occasionally would bend over one of the reindeer that had been thrown. I could see his right arm working back and forth and I came closer to watch just what he was doing.

This native was one of the most important personages in the village. He was the "Keeper of the Saw!"

Now this was a most important post. Certain of the reindeer were singled out by the natives for use as draft animals to pull their sleds. Generally two were used on a sled, but the natives found that the horns of the animals were so wide that, when they were hitched together, their horns interlocked. This of course impeded progress. So the United States government had issued two or three saws to each Eskimo tribe, and reindeer were thus de-antlered. Sometimes only one horn was cut off, but occasionally both were trimmed.

### *The Arctic Corral*

On the outskirts of the roundup a few Eskimos were cutting huge blocks of ice to be used in the construction of a great circular wall, forming a corral. Thousands and thousands of the deer were still to be driven out from the interior,

and for two weeks the Eskimos worked on the corral. Blocks of ice seven feet high, a few inches thick, and four feet wide were cut from the lake, and drawn to the building site. The natives worked virtually in darkness, for the days were now getting perceptibly shorter, and the sun remained but a very limited time in the sky, scarcely climbing above the horizon. In this dim light they completed their Arctic corral, which was nearly a mile in circumference. Off one side of it they also built a number of small ice enclosures to use as private pens. When all was finished the roundup and rodeo started in earnest.

For twelve days the natives were in a fever pitch of activity. During that time between 20,000 and 30,000 reindeer passed through the corral. One of the greatest difficulties of the roundup was to get the reindeer into the enclosure. Reindeer are like sheep. They follow the leader.

The corral entrance was only about thirty feet wide. A score of natives lined themselves at right angles to the entrance. Two thousand deer were driven into the corral at a time. The aligned natives kept yelling and pushing the deer until one was forced through the entrance. Then the others followed.

The interior of the corral was bedlam. The reindeer, frightened to death, were milling about



in panic, grunting. The sharp click of their hoofs in the ice added to the general noise, and you could hear the bodies thud against each other and the rasping of horns as they touched. Sometimes one of the deer would slip and fall and would be crushed to death as the other animals tramped over it.

Into this frenzied herd went the natives. Quick as a flash one of the herders would jump into the press and single out a deer that belonged to him. He could tell by the marking. Then the deer would be shunted into one of the little pens sacred to individual owners. I was amazed at the herders' acumen. The animals' marking seemed indistinguishable to me, but I learned that the natives could recognize, with ease, the new-born, unmarked deer, as well as the marked.

Outside the corral the activity was as great as on the inside. The various families had erected temporary shelters and here the women worked. The butchered deer were turned over to them to be skinned. The sight was disgusting. The women would plunge their hands deep into the slaughtered animals to clean them, and withdraw their arms dripping with blood. When the workers grew hungry they would cut a piece from the still warm carcass and chew it with much gusto.

Dogs broke loose from their stakes and harried the deer which the women were skinning.

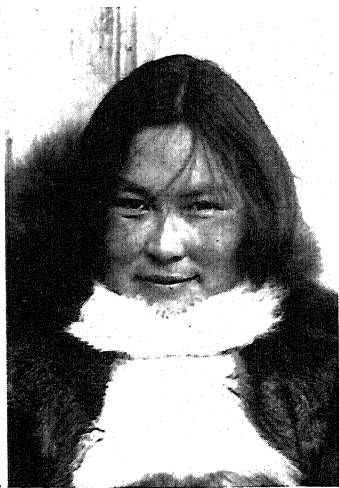
The outside of the corral looked like a battle field. The snow was drenched with blood and the odor was unforgettable, to say it politely. Sometimes the women would stand on blocks of ice and look over into the corral, cupping their chins in bloody hands.

### *Eskimo Pie*

One day while walking along outside the corral I saw some women making the original Eskimo pie! Now I must shatter your illusions and tell you that real Eskimo pie is not composed of a fine, sweet chocolate surrounding a slab of delicious ice-cream.

It is made of reindeer tallow. The women beat and pound and whip the thick tallow until it is light and frothy. Then dirty fingers are plunged into the mess, and Eskimo tongues lick it up greedily. It is the *pièce de résistance*, the dessert of desserts for them. But this merely as an 'aside.' I was hunting — so I have already said — for a 'cast.'

I had an excellent chance to see all types and characters in the village and I studied them closely, hoping to find other natives suitable to act in my motion picture. Aguvaluk took a prominent part in the roundup and so did Kivalina. She was just as busy now as she had been on the beach. More and more I felt assured that



ESKIMO TYPES

KAGMUK  
SEGEVAN

ARNARNLUNGUAK  
TUKTU



I had found a true "leading woman." She certainly was a leading woman in Wainwright Village.

Another character I discovered was Segevan, Chief Reindeer Herder. He seemed to be as old as the hills. The texture of his skin was like a mummy's, dried and wrinkled and tough. His dark little eyes were almost hidden by leather-like pouches and his ancient hands were gnarled talons.

To him the natives paid the utmost respect. Twenty years ago Segevan had been taught by Laplanders the ways of the reindeer and he was most cunning in his craft. Lopp had appointed him Chief Herder for the Wainwright tribe.

*A Movie-Man  
"who didn't know  
his Business."*

The reindeer count had now been completed and the natives were restive. They wanted to get back into the interior with their herds. The dark days soon would be on the north country and it was time for fox trapping in the interior.

The merry-making always following a round-up was coming to a close. I had arranged to get some films showing the natives in a series of races with deer and dog sledge but the light was

too poor for photographing and I kept delaying the day. This delay and that caused by bad weather irritated them. They wanted to conduct their lives without interference from the white man.

It was only through the good offices of Segevan that the Eskimos were detained at all. He prevailed upon them eventually to gather in order to let me photograph a dance. On the top of a snow-drift about fifty natives, men and women, arranged themselves for the dance. In back of them was grouped the orchestra which consisted of four men who held in their hands what looked like palm-leaf fans. Closer investigation proved these to be skins of the stomach of the walrus which had been stretched over circular strips of driftwood. With little sticks the orchestra sounded the first measure of the dance, and the drummers raised a chant which rapidly increased in tempo. The dancing natives began to leap violently and stamp heavily to the tolerably even rhythm. They threw their arms from side to side and twisted their bodies, all in perfect time. The singing would then end abruptly and as abruptly start again.

I found later that some of the song came *ex-tempore*, although most of it was a barbaric saga dealing with the evil spirits, the moon, the stars, and the elements. I was able to recognize in

some parts the imitation of natural sounds. Animal calls were also interlarded.

In order to photograph all phases of the dance it was necessary for me to jump about with my camera, getting shots from the rear, taking long-shots, close-ups, and other shots from different angles. This conduct of mine aroused much mirth and a great deal of contempt among the natives. How, they thought, could the white man see the dance and make the record if he didn't stay in one spot and look at it?

Jim had told Aguvaluk during our conference in his igloo that my record of the natives would be imprinted on a ribbon in my camera or "box," as the natives called it. The news spread, so all the natives at the dance realized, in a vague way, that I was making pictures of them. And they wanted them made according to their own ideas. Before I came to Wainwright, none of the Eskimos had ever seen a motion picture camera and knew absolutely nothing about it, but they knew, they affirmed, that I couldn't get pictures if I kept up my jumping about.

Half a dozen times during the dance some one of the natives would walk over to me and shake his head, intimating that I didn't know my business. Even Kivalina, the shy one, was assured that I needed instruction in the taking of motion pictures; several times she came with advice. I

smiled pleasantly but kept right on doing things as I knew they should be done.

I learned that the natives were not alone in the belief that I didn't know my business. Jim Allen had been watching the ceremony from the door of the trading post and when I returned he, too, shook his head dubiously, intimating that I would bring back few real pictures if I kept leaping about with the camera instead of setting it in one spot and grinding the crank.

*A "John Gilpin"  
of the North*

The next day the light was good enough for me to "shoot" the dog and deer races. The prizes were donated by me and comprised various commodities from Jim's store and also some hunting knives which I had brought along.

First the reindeer races were run off. One and two reindeer were hitched to the sleds. The course was six miles, from the village to Captain Amundsen's cabin and return. Later in the day came the dog-sled races. Competition was open. Anyone could enter and any number of dogs could be used on a single sled. I decided to enter these races myself: together with my camera I mounted a sled pulled by nine dogs and driven by a native boy known as "Michael Jimmie,"



whose real name was Kayutuk. There were numerous entrants, and among these Jim Allen's crack team of thirteen dogs, and Kivalina driving the five-dog team of Aguvaluk.

Another entrant was a native known as "Reilly." When this man's face was in repose, its customary expression, he showed a most ferocious countenance. His head was built in massive proportion, and he had only one eye. This gave him a particularly sinister appearance. But when he talked, his face lighted up, and he proved to be really good-natured.

When "Reilly" made his appearance on his sled the natives were convulsed with laughter. "Reilly" looked so big, and his sled seemed so small, and his dogs were so scrawny, that the total impression he made was that of a Cyclops riding on a kiddy car.

Away we went! I ground the camera crank desperately as sudden lurches of the sled threatened to throw me off into snow-drifts. The race was a close one and in the home stretch I forgot my camera and my dignity and became hoarse with excitement and yelled as loudly as the natives. Jim Allen's fancy team, driven by one of his native boys, was first, my team was second, while Kivalina, driving only five dogs, came in third.

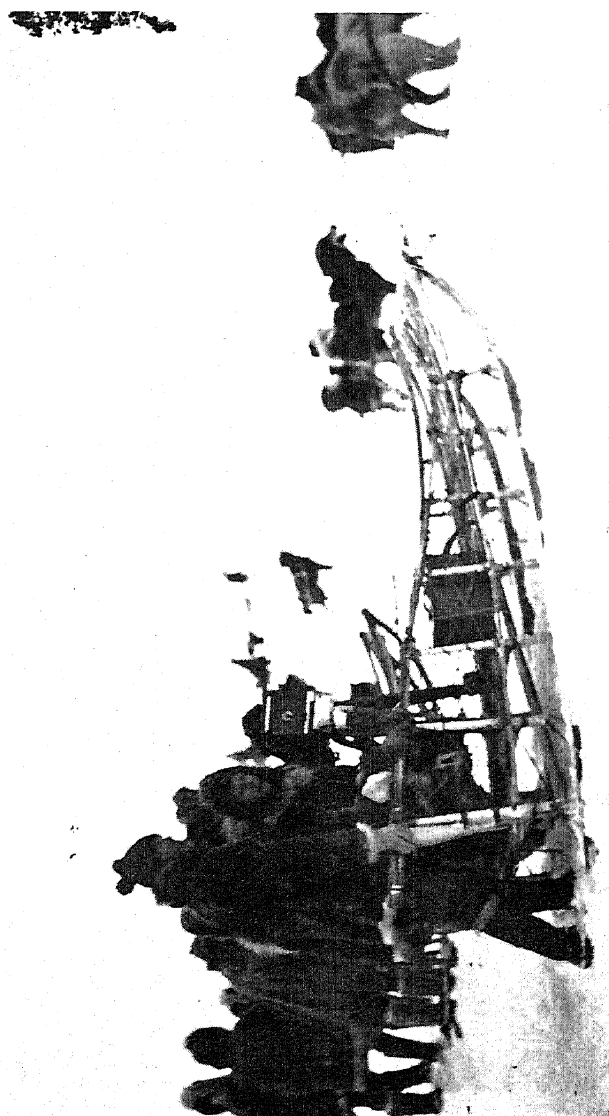
We went to the store for the distribution of

the grand prizes. Jim was passing out, at my expense, sacks of flour, calico, candy, sugar, etc.! The store was crowded with natives who gurgled with delight at each present. And they went into paroxysms of laughter when "Reilly" eventually walked in. The ponderous native had just completed the race!

*First booby prize  
in the Arctic*

I knew that "Reilly," out of his good-nature, had entered the race to help me with my picture, so despite the fact that he had proved himself a snail, I presented him with some hard-tack. It was now "Reilly's" turn to laugh and he did so while his less fortunate brethren looked on in chagrin.

Let it be remembered that during the construction of the ice corral and at the time of the races I had been busy selecting the characters necessary to portray my picture. All had consented to work for me if I fed them. In a few days my bill at Jim's store looked like the French Debt. Aguvaluk, Kivalina, their sisters, brothers, mothers, grand-uncles, nieces, and nephews, to say nothing of a dozen or so dear friends, were blithely eating me out of house, home, and fortune. And a broad smile lighted Jim Allen's face. Business was picking up!



READY FOR THE DOG-TEAM RACE



Even Kagmuk, my Eskimo instructor, took advantage of the golden opportunity. He managed to get an order for some plugs of chewing tobacco. "For my wife," he explained. "Me no chew."

*The Director  
entertains  
the "Company"*

*December 8.* That night a grand pow-wow was held in Aguvaluk's house. It was a custom, after the roundup, to enjoy a few days of merry-making and feasting before the men left to hunt in the interior.

I, of course, was host that night and the food for the banquet came, on my orders, from Jim's store. Those who partook were the "actors and actresses," including important personages and members of the village council.

The room was packed to suffocation. There were a score of men and women in it, all stripped to the waist. Seal-oil lamps threw a rude glare over them as they squatted and ate, and ate, and ate, and ate. Meanwhile they chatted. I was able, by this time, to understand quite a little of the language but only when it was spoken slowly. So the incessant talk that night meant nothing to me. I just squatted uncomfortably and smiled wisely.

To say that I enjoyed the affair would be stretching the truth. The first few minutes interested me, but my interest waned as the heat increased. I realized, however, that I must stick it out if I wanted to get first hand information of Eskimo life. I got it!

For hours and hours the natives jabbered. Their closely packed bodies gave off insufferable heat. Various odors rose. At times I wanted to rise, too, in protest, and leave. But I couldn't afford to insult my guests.

The oil smoke stung my eyes and I was becoming drowsy with the heavy atmosphere. I closed my eyes, hoping that the darkness might also blot out heat and smell. I dozed a moment; on looking up again I was simply dumbfounded at what had happened. My natives had cleaned up every morsel of the large quantity of banquet food, and were now placidly eating hunks of frozen meat and licking seal oil.

The meat was eaten by placing a long piece of it in the mouth, and using a knife to cut the morsel to be chewed from the remainder. The oil was imbibed by the delicate fashion of sticking one's fingers into a seal oil-pot and then, with the tongue, transferring the goo to the mouth. Just like a bear eating honey! Or a small American boy stealing jam!

I asked Aguvaluk why his friends crammed

this mass into their stomachs after gorging themselves on the clean, civilized food I had given them. He explained that their stomachs were "too sweet" as a result of the banquet, and that the present frightful mixture would relieve "the sweetness." Here, ladies and gentlemen, is a priceless antidote for indigestion — raw, frozen meat, and seal oil!

My drowsiness rapidly became fatigue. By much yawning and blinking of eyes I gently conveyed the impression that I wanted to go to sleep. Whereupon the entire company "arranged themselves," grunting and wriggling and pushing the other fellow so as to find space for slumber. I followed suit and crawled into a fur sleeping-bag.

It turned cold during the night and I awoke several times. The exhalations of breath from my companions who were snoring most barbarously had turned to frost on the ceiling. Once when I stirred, Kivalina awoke and got up to spread more skins over me.

In the morning we breakfasted royally off tea and hard-tack. The heat from the fire which was boiling the tea melted the frost on the ceiling, and we ate the morning meal with water dripping down our necks.

I lost no time in going to my cabin and to bed!

*The Purple  
Twilight*

There was so little light in the sky now that I knew I must be using my camera if I wanted to record the northern sun in its final stages. Heavy fog, I feared, would prevent this; however, the mists lifted and for a few days the sun's short duration was characterized by beautiful, radiant colors. And when it set, on the opposite horizon appeared an afterglow of softened fires.

Every twenty-four hours the golden ball just peeped above the horizon as its arc became smaller and smaller. I photographed all these hasty comings and goings.

One day the sun failed to come up. Darkness now gripped the Northland. For an hour before noon and an hour after there was a faint purple twilight. The ice was lighted, and I thought I lived in a fantasy. Then the dark brought obscurity.

Occasionally at night an aurora would flicker up on the sky but so faintly that I was unable to record it with my camera, although I made several attempts.

Darkness had not stopped the activity in the village. I saw men hurrying back and forth across the ice. To my question of what was going on, Jim briefly replied "Seal hunt."



There was an open lead in the ice close to shore and, dimly limned against the strange purple twilight, I saw the natives crouching on the ice watching patiently for seal.

### *The Seal Hunt*

The next day Jim and I, with a dog team, started out over the frozen ocean to the edge of the lead. The going was rough and, in spots, dangerous. The ice, where it had not thickly congealed, proved bothersome, and Jim and I very gingerly negotiated such passages, fearing any moment we would sink through the mush, or break through the thin ice and be precipitated into the Arctic Ocean. There is little chance of living once you fall into the Arctic Ocean at this time of year. The cold is intense and in a few moments you are in a frozen torpor and unable to swim.

Eskimos cannot swim. The water is too cold to learn! It is so cold that even the icy air above is warm in comparison, and when the cold air directly over the water comes in contact with the warmer air above, steam is formed. Clouds of vapor rolled up from the ice, colored weirdly by the twilight. Jim and I made our way through these fairy mists and came to the edge of the lead. The hunters were strung out along it for miles. They crouched almost motionless search-

ing the water with keen eyes for a seal. Occasionally, to keep warm, one would abandon his policy of watchful waiting and walk briskly up and down, or seek shelter from the wind behind an ice hummock.

Once in a while a seal showed himself for a moment and flirted about in the water, but always so far away that the natives arrived just in time to see the animal disappear beneath the waves with a graceful ripple of his silken body.

In a few days the lead closed up. The Eskimos had managed to catch only a very few seals. This was an ominous sign. It indicated a starvation season.

A month later the situation became acute. Meat was at a premium. The goodly supply I had bought myself during the reindeer roundup had been eaten and shared with the Eskimos. Every day they came to see me and ask me when I would put them to work and pay them daily with food.

But I had to bide my time. The days were dark and I could not take successful photographs. I gave them supplies from Jim's trading post until it was virtually denuded of commodities. At last we were obliged to call a halt on food distribution. Although hunting in the interior seemed to be poor, for the early hunters had returned with empty sleds, most of the na-

tives were now into the country behind Wainwright searching for foxes. My cast of characters was scattered to the four winds, and I felt apprehensive that some of them might die on the trail.

*Photographing  
the Aurora*

I was not at loose ends, however. Besides my records of native life I wished to take back with me photographs of the Aurora. And as the twilight grew deeper, its flashes were becoming more vivid. Suddenly one night a vast wavering bow, a cloud of opalescent green, began to form on the horizon. Through the coloring, at first, I could see the stars shining.

A few days later the spectacle of the bow became thicker. The great arc of color began to writhe and surge and twist in the heavens. Flaming banners snaked out from it and hurled themselves into infinity. The ice seemed to be alive. Red, yellow, green, and intermediate tints flickered uneasily over the snow and the north country gleamed softly like one monstrous pearl, iridescent and shimmering.

With the temperature ranging from 35 to 60 degrees below zero, I went out with my camera, and from then on, for many long, weary frozen months, I played hide and seek with the Aurora,

or rather, the Aurora played hide and seek with me.

This magnificent spectacle of the North is as elusive as it is impressive. To catch it when it came, it was necessary, of course, to be out in the open even in the worst of the winter weather. I had no shelter either for myself or the camera.

Wind-driven snow blinded me frequently and seeped into every crack and crevice of the camera. My fingers froze, my eyelashes froze, my feet froze, and what was far more to be regretted, the film froze and snapped. Countless times the Aurora would burst on the horizon and fling itself over the sky in a mad riot of color-flames. Then, as I started to "shoot" it, the film would snap from the cold. Back I would rush to the cabin, thaw out my fingers over the meagre heat from the stove, thaw out the film, and, with my heart beating like a trip-hammer from excitement and anticipation, rush out again with my camera.

But always the Aurora had disappeared! Sick with disappointment, but knowing that if I was successful I would have performed what no other man had ever accomplished before, I once more took up the icy vigil. The torpor of cold settled on me and I trotted back and forth beside my machine, always keeping a wary eye on the heavens.

Again the Aurora flung her dreamlights on the heavenly screen. I cranked the camera handle until the great show died down, and then ran back to my cabin bearing the precious record. With a crude development set I treated the films — to find on them but the most niggardly trace of the spectacle. No good! It all had to be done again.

The only way that I managed to stick at the task was by telling myself, over and over, "I'm doing something that no one else has ever done — I'm doing something real — I'm recording nature's most gorgeous phenomenon."

The whole period now seems to me to be so much a fantastic, frozen dream that I must quote literally the broken phrases of my diary:

*"Tuesday, December 4.* Dark and stormy, up early. Writing. Gave cameras kerosene and alcohol bath. Have decided that cameras must be free from oil. Oil freezes and camera binds. Mechanisms not greatly affected by extreme frost when bone dry and when not subjected to sudden changes of temperature. Camera taken from warm room to below zero weather acts normally for about an hour, after which, action gradually becomes stiff and films begin to split and break.

Cameras loaded with film and left in cold shed and not permitted near warmth at any time work near normal, that is, they run a trifle more stiffly than regularly. Temperature dropped to 40 degrees below about ten o'clock, tonight."

"*Wednesday, December 5.* 40 degrees below zero. Cold affected my teeth, even with my mouth closed. Made color test of Aurora. Unsatisfactory. Will try again. Room cold and I am troubled with insomnia. Guess it's due to almost continual darkness and insufficient outdoor exercise."

"*Thursday, December 6.* Troubled with sleeplessness and irritable. Preparing notes on reindeer industry." (The next few days I did little but exercise regularly and read in order to put myself in a better frame of mind).

"*Thursday, December 13.* 40 degrees below zero. It is 10 A.M. and pitch dark and my shack is colder than blazes. Getting out from under warm blankets into a room whose temperature is 72 degrees below freezing point is something one must get accustomed to in the Arctic. It's getting to be a daily rite with me."

"*Thursday, December 20.* Forty de-

grees below. There is no wind and it doesn't seem cold at all. The Arctic ocean is creaking and groaning as though ill at ease. The ice floes are pounding and crushing against one another as though they were carrying on a grudge fight. The terrific crush of ice is making a furious effort to push itself over the continent. The Aurora made a faint attempt at display."

I never got far away from the Aurora. The project of photographing it was rarely out of my mind, and I worked desperately to effect some change in my camera or the film. After much study and calculation I made certain changes in the equipment and waited to try them. My chance soon came.

One day a vast sea of fire broke in the heavens, and gigantic waves of gorgeous colors spilled themselves across the horizon. I rushed out with the camera and began to "shoot."

The Aurora poured ethereal lava over the face of the sky; brilliant streamers, like ribbons about an old fashioned May-pole, shaped themselves into a long funnel, from which burst immense sheets of living light.

The spectacle piled one climax of frenzied color on another. Vast streams of blood-red

fire were spewed out. Flames of transparent emerald green and vivid yellow splashed haphazardly from the Divine palette, flooding the entire sky with stupendous magic. The flames shook and quivered in a delirium of beauty, and the great crown of light trembled as if about to fall asunder in an exquisite agony of color. The earth itself reflected the heavenly wonder. The ice was a kaleidoscope as the lights flickered and whirled above it.

My hands shook; I trembled as I turned the crank of the camera. Bands of yellow, red, and green, swept over my face. I had been transplanted into a world of unearthly dreams.

As quickly as the spectacle came it vanished! The gloom of night settled once more over the Arctic.

I sped to my cabin and with eager hands developed the films. At last, success! True, the film had not captured all the display, but enough of it was there for me to know that I had solved the problem and that I would return to civilization bearing with me a visible reproduction of a thing so beautiful that it must be seen to be believed. I wonder now how I have the temerity to attempt to describe it.



*Santa Claus visits  
the Reindeer  
Country*

*December 25.* If I appear more impatient than other travellers have been over the darkness and consequent limitations imposed by the Arctic winter, it must be remembered that I did not come into the country as an explorer, nor with any scientific interest. My concern with Eskimo life centred wholly on my ability to photograph it. My reactions throughout the trip were colored, first, by anxious care for the safety of my camera and films, and secondly, by my endeavors to win the natives to co-operation.

An ethnologist or anthropologist may well sit comfortably inside during a blizzard and occupy himself making notes of language, customs, and folklore. But to me hours spent indoors were hours lost. Therefore I find myself listing these inactive weeks as "dark and hopeless days."

One date, however, stood out boldly — a spot light and a great relief to the monotony.

Lopp and I had planned the day, before I left Seattle on my journey north. When I arrived in Wainwright, the stores I carried from the *Boxer* included a small Christmas tree and a Santa Claus costume.

During the time that Upiksoun, Jim Allen's

brother-in-law, was at Wainwright and during the time that we had made the canoe trip to Icy Cape with him, I told him it was my wish that, if possible, he return to me at Christmas. Upiksoun had long been associated with the white man. He knew some of their customs, and I told him that I wanted him for special services on December 25th.

On that day the temperature was twenty-eight degrees below zero, and a storm of two days duration already had increased in fury. Little chance, I thought, of Upiksoun coming to Wainwright.

But I was mistaken. Early on Christmas morning a knock roused me. Nearly frozen, yet smiling, Upiksoun, covered with snow, stood in the doorway! The Eskimo's bravery and the care-free manner in which he passed it off were admirable. Here was a Christmas spirit which few white men could equal. When I learned later under what conditions he came, I consider his visit one of the most chivalrous acts I have ever known.

Two days before, in the teeth of the gale, the native had parted from his sick wife, and with five dogs hitched to his sled had started over the trail from Icy Cape to Wainwright. Upiksoun was the best musher and trail man the Wainwright natives knew, but even his lore and ability

failed in this storm. He had not gone far when he realized that it would take a miracle to bring him safely to his destination. It was impossible to see five yards ahead. Upiksoun had only one hope. That hope centred in his storm-leader Ivuk (meaning walrus), an ancient dog in whose weather-beaten, loyal old head lay all the canine wisdom of the North.

To me, Ivuk's services in leading his master to safety were thrilling. Nor can his four companions be relegated to obscurity without a word of admiration. While Upiksoun rested and thawed out in my cabin, I went to feed and care for his animals. My emotions actually choked me as I leaned over the dogs. They were pitiful. The snow had packed itself stiffly amid the fur against their hides. Between each paw the ice lay solid, and blood from their cracked skin crimsoned the white. They were starving and ready to drop but they managed to stand on their feet and they seemed to realize my thoughts. They whined and looked up at me from ice-rimmed eyes, licking my hands.

Throughout my wanderings, which have taken me to all quarters of the globe, I have been grateful for my love of dogs and the way dogs have, apparently, liked me. In Africa and the Arctic alike, dogs and I always have got along together and more than once they have saved my life.

After feeding Upiksoun's dogs I went back into the cabin and pulled out the Santa Claus costume, whiskers and all. Then I told Upiksoun, the Eskimo, that I wanted him to put on the clothes and play Santa Claus, for the Eskimos. The native grinned in sheer delight. He realized that Santa Claus was a kind of Good Spirit of the White Man that brought gifts to needy people. After stuffing skins underneath the red garments to give "Santa" the proper aspect of *avoir du pois*, the stage was set.

I went over to Jim and told him my plans. The rough old fellow was as delighted as Upiksoun and soon every Eskimo in the village was crowded, somehow, into the trading post. Jim and I hinted that something unexpected was about to take place and the natives were on edge with anticipation.

Suddenly the trading-post door opened and, accompanied by an icy blast, a white-bearded, fat figure, clothed in crimson, entered. The natives were pop-eyed. They giggled and nudged each other, half in fear and half in childish delight at the apparition.

The disguised Upiksoun struck an attitude, and *sotto voce* dramatically intoned in the Eskimo tongue: "I am Santa Claus. I am a Good Spirit. I have ridden through the clouds with

my reindeer and sled and I have brought with me many gifts for you."

Then, while the Eskimos stood breathlessly in anticipation, Upiksoun backed out of the door, and closed it for a moment. He opened it again and came in dragging behind him a huge crate in which stood the Christmas tree piled around with presents. Jim came forward to light the candles on the tree. A sorry tree! During the time I had stored it all the pine needles had dropped off. At best it had been but a poor imitation of the big, redolent, full-branched trees that adorn civilized homes at Christmas time. Now it was 'awful.' But my tree was brave with gaudy tinsel and to the natives it was a veritable dream-tree. The sparkling tinsel made it look almost alive.

Upiksoun plunged his hand into the crate, and one by one drew out the presents which I had wrapped and tied with green ribbon and had addressed to each of the natives. "The Good Spirit wants to know to whom the White Man wants this gift to go?" Upiksoun asked each time.

"To Segevan, or Kagmuk, or Kivalina," I would reply, reading the names I had written on the tags.

The package was then tossed by "Santa Claus" into the hands of that particular native.

The shouting and laughter made the trading post's dirty old rafters ring, as each Eskimo, surrounded by the others, unwrapped his gift. There were plugs of chewing tobacco, needles and thread, and calico, knives, mittens, warm underwear, canned goods, sacks of flour, pounds of coffee, tea, bright beads, chocolate, hard-tack, gum-drops — innumerable articles, including ivory harness swivels, arrow-heads, and other things of the sort carved out by Upiksoun in his lonely hours at Icy Cape. Jim Allen also was the donor of many gifts. Amazed and gratified beyond their wildest dreams, the natives, still standing at a respectful distance from "Santa Claus," asked him to whom they must give presents in return. There is an unbroken custom among the natives of giving presents to those who give them presents.

Upiksoun replied, "The Good Spirit of Santa Claus does not want presents in return. It is enough for him to know that he has brought happiness to his children."

This was greeted with a murmur of admiration for such an unselfish spirit. And then Upiksoun, the Santa Claus of the Arctic, vanished into the night!

\*



UPIKSOUN, A SANTA CLAUS OF THE  
REINDEER COUNTRY





*"Christmas Dinner"*

As the crowning gift of the Christmas night, Jim and I prepared a frightful quantity of reindeer stew in several wash-boilers! And the company fell to! Throughout the night they sang and made merry and feasted. The smacking of lips must have been audible for miles. The natives danced and shouted with joy. On the counter and on the floor, Eskimo children lay on their backs in an orgy of gourmandizing and dropped hordes of gum-drops into their distending tummies.

Upiksoun, minus his Santa Claus garb, then strode in and was affectionately greeted by the natives. He said he had just come in off the trail. His friends chattered and told him, with wonder still in their eyes, how a Good Spirit, clothed in fiery red, had brought gifts to them. Then I presented gifts to Upiksoun. Ah, consummate actor! Upiksoun seemed overwhelmed with joy and surprise at this, and asked for minute details about how the "Good Spirit," clothed in red, looked, and acted!

After the last vestige of the reindeer stew had disappeared the Eskimos started to dance. Soon half a dozen natives began chanting and in a few moments all in the cabin were warming up. The celebration lasted through the night.

As the dance grew more spirited, Jim Allen joined in with his wife Elinor. Tired as Upik-soun was he forgot his fatigue in the rhythm. The floor was pounded slowly by hundreds of feet. The children began to leap with excitement.

They danced and they smoked! The Eskimo pipe-load contains not only tobacco but reindeer hair. When the natives filled their pipes with the Christmas tobacco, their fingers would pluck at their fur and pull off tufts of hair. This they mixed with the tobacco. For producing an odor with a kick in it I have yet to find the equal of that particular blend.

The smoke was unbelievably thick and strong and rose in clouds to the rafters which now shook from the steady tread of the dance-crazed Eskimos. Excitement by this time had made them as rapturous as negroes at a camp meeting. Oblivious of everything except the music, the natives alternately leaped and swayed, almost hysterically, to the monotonous rhythm. They had worked themselves into a frenzy and the sweat was pouring from them as they danced in their heavy fur garments.

The atmosphere was insufferable. Compared to it, the night I spent in Aguvaluk's hut at the pow-wow was like a night in a rose-garden. I actually reeled from suffocation.

The natives asked me to join in the dance. But I was loathe to do so. They kept insisting and so, grinning shame-facedly at myself for acting like a fool, I joined in, jumping up and down, throwing my arms about, imitating a barking dog, putting my hand behind my ear as if I heard a seal splash in the water, pretending that I was harpooning a whale, and otherwise conducting myself like a first-class maniac. But, anything to please! That was my motto as long as I was in Wainwright.

The natives were quite overcome, apparently, by the way I danced. But in reality the dance nearly overcame me. The close air, the thousand and one odors, the reindeer-hair smoke, all assailing my senses in a most felonious combination, made me uneasy, distressed, and then definitely ill. When I opened the door, the cold air struck the hot air inside and the cloud of vapor, obscuring the dancers, rose before my eyes. I was obliged to summon all my courage before I entered the reeking place again.

At length the flesh proved weaker than the spirit and I called an end to the merry-making. Still dancing, the natives, leaving an abominable trail of smoke behind, shouted their way down to their igloos. Then I went out into the wide, open spaces of the North and inhaled copious lungfuls of pure, sweet, cold air — and so to bed.

*First Steps  
Alone*

*December 28.* Between Christmas and the New Year I made my first trip of any distance alone by dog-sled. There was nothing really dangerous about the undertaking, unless a bad storm blew up. I had five dogs and a good supply of food.

When I started, the stars were shining but they slowly faded and that unearthly, purple twilight spread its dim color over the ice. My journey was not difficult but it was tedious. I could not help feeling depressed while alone, and I recollected how I had told Lopp on the *Boxer* that Christmas time would be my Waterloo. His fantastic talk of black sunlight — the intolerable summer sun glare — seemed absurd to me now as I lived in this long-continued, ghoul-ish night.

Attanuk, my destination, lay twenty-eight miles away. The trip took six and a half hours — they seemed to be sixteen. The ice was uneven. Sometimes I struggled up high ridges and then for miles glided along smoothly. I kept close to the coast, knowing that if I did so I could not miss the village. When I grew tired of running beside the sleigh I rested on it, while the husky dogs panted and flurried ahead. But resting in the Arctic, out of doors, is not a pleas-

ure. After a few moments I would feel intensely cold and so return to trotting.

My visit to Attanuk was three-fold in purpose. I needed relaxation from the monotony of Aurora photography, I wanted to test out my abilities on the trail, and I desired some furs that had been made into garments for me by Wahluk's wife. These natives had formerly been residents of Wainwright. Wahluk was the mightiest polar bear hunter in the district. The male polar bear does not hibernate in winter like the female, but stalks the snow and ice for prey. At all seasons he is an enemy to be feared. His flat cruel head and pig-like eyes are a constant menace to unwary travellers. Every year at the inset of winter Wahluk moved to the vicinity of Attanuk, where bears were plentiful and he could find scope for his prowess.

Sometime before I arrived the village dogs had scented my approach, and when I finally drove up the entire population was on hand to greet me.

Wahluk and his wife took me directly to their home. On my entering, a native woman, using a stick, knocked the ice from my fur where it had become encrusted by my breath during the trip. She also proceeded to mend my garments, which we must confess, exceeds our "civilized" notions of hospitality.

Hot food was served, and after the meal two

old Eskimos came in to greet the white man. One of the newcomers produced a deck of greasy well-worn cards, and we fell to playing whist! Wahluk and I were paired against the visitors, and the latter, who were regular "whist fiends," licked us to a frazzle.

The game being decided against Wahluk and me, the visitors, in huge enjoyment, left, and my host launched into a long narration of the deeds of men of valor including himself.

*I find my  
Scenario*

One tale he told me I remembered hearing from Lopp during my trip north on the *Boxer*. I also recollected that Lopp had been greatly impressed by the story and had asked me to ascertain the hero who had figured in it. I asked Wahluk who this brave chap might be, and he replied "Aguvaluk." Here was luck! My own leading man the actual hero in a tale which was already taking on the form of a classic with the natives.

The story was this: Aguvaluk, while in the interior at a reindeer camp, set out to find some stray deer and at the same time to inspect his fox traps. He drove a sledge drawn by two reindeer. As these animals feed themselves, they offer a distinct advantage over dogs for which

the driver must carry food. Aguvaluk took only a meagre supply of food for himself. He had with him what was packed on the sled and, in an extreme, there were the two reindeer he was driving. Slaughtering the deer, however, was scarcely to be thought of, for in that case he would have nothing to carry him back, except his two legs.

The traps were far apart and his inspection of them proved a series of vain efforts. The second day on the trail had brought forth nothing — neither foxes nor signs of the strayed deer.

An Arctic storm suddenly blew up. As it promised to be of some duration, Aguvaluk built himself a snow house, staked his two reindeer outside, near his sled, and crawled into the temporary shelter.

For two days the Eskimo, snug in his lair, heard the storm beating on the frozen ground. When at last hunger forced him to reconnoiter he discovered that he was literally buried alive under tons of snow. His position was precarious. He attacked the ceiling of the shelter with his knife. The storm's snow had piled hard and deep on top of it, but he dug and dug and dug. When he was beginning to breathe with difficulty in the air-tight space, a sudden knife-thrust through the snow and a gleam of light told him that he had won out.

He crawled through the roof and looked about for his reindeer. During the interval they had pulled away from their stakes and had vanished. His sled was buried many feet beneath the solidly packed drifts. The storm had changed the whole topography of the scene. New and misleading banks of snow appeared on every side.

Aguvaluk, like all other Eskimos, could read the "snow-compass." This reading consists in noting the tiny ridges made in the snow-drifts. When the natives determine the direction in which the ridges run, they have determined which way the wind has blown. Knowing that deer travel in the teeth of the storm, Aguvaluk put two and two together and started in the right direction after the animals.

His hunger had grown acute by this time, and it was with keen relief that he at last sighted the lost deer. Sinking to his knees in the snow-drift, the native gave thanks to the Christian God, and then, with his knife, slew one of the deer and skinned it. While the carcass was still warm he cut fresh meat and ate until he had his fill.

Aguvaluk knew himself to be in a horrible predicament. He had food now, but no sled. What was he to do? He mused a while, scanning the empty stretches of the white landscape, and then his eyes fell on the dead animal's skin.





**AGVALUK, THE 'LEADING MAN,' LEARNING THE STORY OF MY CAREER**

The picture-writing is done upon a bow carved of driftwood —

The centre sketch shows the author, his camera, and assistant; others are of animals stalked on the trail



The intense cold had already frozen it as stiff as wood.

The Eskimo took his knife again and cut strips from the reindeer skin to form a harness. Then out of the frozen hide he made a sled. Hitching the remaining deer to this ingenious contrivance he was swiftly carried in safety to Wainwright!

When Wahluk had completed the story I realized that I had found the nucleus around which to build my motion-picture story — a tale that would have double interest in being based on fact, with the original hero re-enacting it for the screen. I determined later to take Aguvaluk out on the trail during a storm, have him build a snow house, cut his way through, track the deer, and kill one. Thus I would be able to photograph the episode entirely as it had occurred up to the point where he rode off on the skin sled.

### *An Arctic Trap*

Seeing that I listened so intently to his stories, Wahluk grew very friendly. He showed me the skins and furs that were the results of his winter's efforts. Quite a number of white foxes had been caught in his traps, and I purchased one from him as a present for my mother and to commemorate my first trip alone over the trail. In ex-

change for the skin I gave Wahluk an order for thirty-five dollars on Jim's trading post.

I felt that I had successfully broken the ice between him and myself, so I asked the great hunter if, during the spring, he would take me on a polar bear hunt. He assented with a grunt. I hoped thus to be able to get some "human interest" pictures of the female polar bear with her young, when she came out of her winter's seclusion.

That night I slept in Wahluk's home beside him and his wife. In the morning, with my white fox skin which I had obtained for my mother, and with the fur garments the woman had made, I departed for Wainwright.

The trip back was uneventful, except for the last hour. My dogs were tired, it being their first journey over the trail that season. A biting cold wind blew up and it grew suddenly dark. A storm was brewing. The weakened dogs turned their noses up and howled dismally. Before I knew it, I was lost! Complete darkness prevented me from seeing whether or not I was following the coast. I felt more than uneasy. I soon became as exhausted as the dogs were, and numb with cold.

As luck would have it, a native who had been out in the vicinity looking after his traps, and was returning, crossed my trail just in time. He

ran a thong from the rear of his sled to my lead dog, and while I rested on the sled he guided me back to Wainwright.

We had hardly arrived when the blizzard broke over the settlement and the temperature dropped to forty degrees below zero. Had I been alone on the trail another fifteen minutes I doubt whether I should have come out alive.

The blizzard lasted several days. When at last I ventured out, the map of the entire country seemed changed. Huge new drifts were piled high, and old drifts had been scattered. I told Jim I was going for a hike to get a little exercise. He warned me to take a dog along on a leash. Some of the drifts, he said, were hollow, and I would probably fall through unless I had a dog to take the plunge first and give me time to retreat.

Feeling especially adventurous, I disregarded the trader's warning and started out alone. I paid for my pig-headedness, though, for I had not walked far when I felt the snow slip under me and, like a plummet, I dropped to the bottom of a drift. A mild avalanche of snow poured in on top of me, and it was a very wet and very much chagrined young man that managed to flounder out. The accident afforded Jim a hearty laugh while I was thawing in my cabin.

*Eskimo Habits  
and Customs*

These dark days were not dark enough to interfere with the activities of normal life, but were too dark for general photography. When I was not chasing the Aurora with my camera, I spent hours in the native village learning native manners and habits.

My observations of the family life were greatly aided by a study of Stefansson's "The Friendly Arctic" and "My Life with the Eskimo." These books I had brought north with me and I found invaluable, inasmuch as they gave accurate and detailed "background" with which to make my own notes.

The most striking characteristics of the Eskimo are his improvidence, his honesty, and his communistic spirit. No other person goes hungry so long as anybody has a scrap of food to divide.

Fortunately of late years — since the organizing of the reindeer industry — food scarcity is a comparatively rare thing and does not drive the natives to desperate methods to keep them from starving to death. Formerly they practised infanticide and were sometimes forced to do away with their elders so that there would be fewer mouths to feed, though, in the natural course of things, the Eskimo's care of his old folks is one

of his most beautiful traits. If there are no children to provide for the old people, they are passed around the village from one family to another, and are made thoroughly welcome.

In domestic affairs the native woman is supreme. The marriage tie between Eskimos is closer than the similar bond between white men and women. An Eskimo wife has no grounds for divorce. She is not bothered by a husband who spends his nights "out." The Eskimo husband, however, does not impose this virtue on himself. Even if he wanted to forsake the hearth, he has no place to go. The native husband seldom gets far away from his wife in the polar regions.

When his wife is ill the husband is the doctor; it is he who even brings her babies into the world.

Besides cooking, the woman's domestic work consists in feeding and caring for the dogs and in making the fur garments so necessary to life in this cold land. The husband, as the hunter, provides both fuel and food. An even division this — he feeds her and she clothes him. But the provider is extremely improvident, and frequently they are almost starving before he takes to the trail. Then the whole family usually accompanies him — wife, children, grandparents, and dogs.

The babies receive crudely expert care and the

children grow up happily, amusing themselves as best they can. There are no cradles in the Arctic, and the Eskimo mother is forced to use a method of rocking which seems strange to us but which is, nevertheless, efficacious.

She sits with her legs stretched out before her, the infant resting on her insteps. By moving her feet, the mother manages to rock her baby while her hands are occupied with necessary work — sewing or cutting garments. When the baby gets cold the mother stuffs it underneath her voluminous furs. On the trail she carries it this way, with a string tied around her waist to prevent the child from falling. Thus assembled, mother trots along behind the sled and baby sleeps peacefully.

When the missionaries first came among the natives they baptised them, bestowing American names upon them. Most of these were biblical, some historical, but as the natives retained their old names the combinations are laughable. A certain “Kagak” was christened “William Penn.” Kagak’s daughter is named Soskiana by the natives, but a missionary attached the name of “Susie.” She is not called Susie Kagak, but Susie William Penn. In the same way there is a Mary Ann John Peter, and many other ludicrous arrangements. One day when I was on the trail I ventured into a strange hut.



In it dwelt an old man and a woman. I asked the husband for his name. Bursting with pride the aged native declared, "Me, Adam," and pointing to his wife he said, "Him, Eve."

The native name has no sex distinction, nor do they use family names. When a death occurs in the village the first child born afterwards takes the name of the deceased. Even if the late dead were a man and the new born proves to be a girl, the infant assumes the masculine name and the natives pay her the respect which they gave the departed, mentally investing her with all his attributes.

For this reason, the Eskimo baby, although properly nurtured, is thoroughly spoiled. The parents dare not offend, by correction, a child whom they believe as worthy of respect as the person from whom it gained its name. This rather casual method of rearing the young continues until the children are adolescent, when they are instructed by the elders on the proper course of conduct. Strange though it may seem the children of the Arctic mature as early as those in tropical climates.

Manners, as white people understand them, do not exist for the natives. If a woman stumbles and falls the men make no attempt to assist her to her feet. There is no hat-raising or similar courtesies; no sign of deference paid to woman.

Table manners, as you have seen, are negligible. When the wife has prepared a meal, the diners "fall to" as soon as possible, each one helping himself hurriedly. The wife feeds the little children. After the age of four the young native is able to feed himself.

Eskimo intelligence is low in that it is incapable of sustained thought; nor is it original or creative. Their forte lies in mimicry.

Their language is one of prefixes and suffixes and is musical because of a heavy sprinkling of open vowels in it. Conversation is carried on in rather high pitch and with many inflections. Owing to their keen sense of mimicry a word or two with gesticulation manages to convey a complete idea.

*Hollywood  
invades the  
Arctic*

Several successes in photographing the Aurora put me in an excellent humor. Irritability and insomnia had vanished, and an exuberance of good feeling took the place of depression. In this complacent and amiable frame of mind I arranged an entertainment for the natives. My idea was to assemble all the villagers in a clear level spot and show them motion pictures that I had taken when in Africa.

These Eskimos had never before seen a motion picture. Couple this with the fact that they were looking at pictures of a race who lived under exactly opposite conditions from their own and you will have some slight idea of the impression the first Wainwright motion-picture show made on its audience!

When I first thought of showing the pictures I was puzzled about obtaining a proper screen. But Nature solved my problem. The answer to the difficulty was — snow. I placed several large blocks of hardened snow together and then smoothed them down. The result was a surprisingly fine screen.

With the screen in place I brought out my portable projector and the films that I had taken in Africa and had brought with me into the Arctic. I bade my audience be seated and the natives squatted on the frozen tundra. The night was bitterly cold and they huddled together closely and hunched themselves well into their furs.

There was a buzz of conversation in the audience as they conjectured what was going to happen. The jabbering stopped abruptly when figures began to move on the snow-screen. The White Man's magic held the audience spell-bound!

Surprise, awe, fear, wonder, and fascination

were depicted on the natives' faces. My audience was like a child with a Jack-in-the-box. Their bewilderment seemed pitiful. First they could not grasp the process of the motion picture — what it was; and secondly, the figures depicted were those of human beings unlike anything an Eskimo could possibly imagine in his wildest dreams.

The high-spot of the African film was a Kaffir dance. It showed the black natives decorated with wire bracelets, ostrich-plume head-dresses, animal skins, and their bodies daubed with tallow. Some of the natives were seen in short grass-skirts, some in loin-cloths, and some in nothing at all. They were carrying spears and skin shields.

Standing closely together in military formation, the screen-figures began a spectacular and thrilling dance while moving in rude precision to the barbaric beating of the tom-tom.

As the first feet of the dance-picture unwound before the startled eyes of the natives they broke into laughter! The idea of people being so foolish as to go naked was too much for the Eskimo sense of humor. When my audience laughed I felt delighted. My show was a success, I thought, rather proudly. But it turned out the reverse! Their laughter was a boomerang, and on its return trip brought with it a

difficulty which took much ingenuity and patience to overcome, as you shall see. I could not look into the future, however, and so I was delighted with their very evident signs of appreciation.

The motion picture continued. The African natives glided and dipped and posed on the snow-screen. The Eskimos now had ceased laughing and were watching intently. Suddenly they realized that the magic men were dancing. My audience recognized the basic rhythm of the universal expression. True, the Africans employed different motions and body twists from theirs, but the underlying *motif* is the same whether the dancers live near the North Pole or near the Equator. Imagine my momentary astonishment when the Eskimos, without a word, rose *en masse* and did their own dance!

The situation was grotesque. On the screen the African natives danced naked under the sun, against a background of towering tropical vegetation. Here, opposite to them, on this bare coast of the Polar Sea, Eskimos began dancing under the Aurora Borealis, in a childish pride, to show the White Man that they were as clever as his magic picture-beings!

When the show was over, the natives, still impressed, went back to their homes to talk over this strangest of sights. It gave them food for

thought during many days. I suppose that years from now young Eskimos will hear of the time when the White Man made spirit pictures jump out of a box and dance on the snow.

*The Return  
of the Sun*

*January 22, 1924.* "Twenty-eight degrees below zero. The sun came back today."

This terse entry in my diary serves to record the happiest of days. The dreary, monotonous hours of sunless time were over. I began to feel that, after all, I really was a White Man instead of a child of the dark. I had again come into man's first heritage — light.

According to my watch, which was prone to inaccuracy, the sun returned at 11.45 A.M. The exact time, however, is not important. It was back. That was enough.

When it first appeared over the horizon there was a shout from the village. The natives came running from their homes, gathered on the snow-drifts, and danced hilariously. Jim Allen seemed as much affected as the Eskimos, and shouted with them for joy. In a few moments smoke began to puff from the houses, giving sign that feasts of seal-oil doughnuts were being prepared.

The sun rose only a little above the horizon and cast grotesquely long shadows over the tundras. Rising to the south, it threw a wealth of color in the northern sky and then all too hastily set.

My real work was now to begin. From this time on there would be sufficient light for the sensitive eye of my camera. After sunset I walked over to Jim's to get his advice on how to handle the natives while I was taking my pictures.

If the sun's advent had touched the sublime, the discovery I now made precipitated us into the ridiculous. Jim the effectual — this man of iron muscle and stern determination — had been fostering a secret. I was unaware of it, but murder will out. Jim had false teeth! And he didn't want anybody to know it! He was actually crestfallen when I walked in on him before he had time to insert them. However, he was forced to laugh and he told me that his store teeth were very precious. He had but the one set and wore them infrequently so that they would last longer.

For some reason my discovery seemed to induce in the trader a revealing mood, and he told me the story of his life, with many incidents of his years at Wainwright, and interpolated the story of the first Arctic labor strike. It was told to give me an idea of how he handled the natives.

I must say that Jim was highly successful in this. He took the place of a king. He was "Oomelik," or "Big Chief," to the Eskimos. His word was law. They knew, after the strike, that he had them in a strong grip.

The native "strike" occurred years ago when Jim was unloading stores at Wainwright from a ship. Three miles was as close to the shore as a large ship could manoeuvre and natives were paid three dollars' equivalent for every ton of supplies they paddled to land and carried to the warehouse.

One day the natives held a pow-wow and refused to work. Jim learned that they wanted to be paid five dollars for every ton they transported. "All right, I'll give you five dollars," Jim told them. In high glee over their victory the natives went to work again. They received their pay which was in the shape of vouchers for goods at the store. But when they came to buy they found, to their surprise, that the prices had risen overnight! Jim nonchalantly explained that the price of freight had risen, too. From that time on Jim never had much trouble with the natives. They knew that he was too clever for them.



*Dog-Sledging*

Several days later I noticed a number of sleds leaving the village and Jim told me that the natives were going into the interior to look after their traps once more and to care for the reindeer, and that they would return in April when the herds migrated to the coast. As the weather becomes warm in the interior, the deer are plagued by mosquitoes and other insects, and instinct starts them toward the coast. About this time the fawns are born and the natives must be on hand to care for them.

Realizing that I would be able to obtain interesting photographs in the interior I told my cast of characters that I would join them in March. I informed Jim that I was leaving the Post in March and he promised to help me, adding also that he would take me on the whale-hunt which followed the spring roundup of deer.

Between late January and early March, with the exception of receiving mail and making a dog-sledge trip to Point Barrow, there were no happenings of particular interest. I worked mainly on the scenario of the story I was to film and made occasional "shots" of local views.

Once I had occasion to shoot a parhelion, or "sun-dog," a solar phenomenon occurring during

frosty weather, which indicates a change of weather for the worse. The sun-dog resembled a rainbow and in one phase the refraction of light caused numerous suns to appear around the true one.

Then the long-awaited mail came up by dogsledge. There was one letter for me, a message from my sister Ruth who was in New York. Several months would pass before there was another mail, as it was delivered but three times during the winter.

A trip to Point Barrow was made with Jim on his invitation to accompany him when he brought a load of fox skins to Charlie Brower. The trader and I each had a team of dogs and sled. By this time I had acquired my own team of nine dogs and I was able to drive them fairly well. So I had no hesitancy about making the trip, especially as Jim would be along.

We started under good auspices, but just before reaching Attanuk, a storm broke and forced us to stop over at the village. That night, what with Jim and myself, there were eight sleepers in the house of Wahluk, the old polar bear hunter.

Much to my disgust the storm was still raging when we awoke in the morning and we had no choice but to spend another night there. After sleepless hours, and when the storm had abated,

Jim and I left Attanuk about six o'clock in the morning, heading across Peard Bay. The shore line of the bay was fifty miles in length whereas the direct route across was but thirty.

We were well out on the ice when the storm returned with added fury. The wind blew severely; needle snow was whipped into our faces. Even the dogs could not stand it and they veered to the west. Our destination lay on the east. For eleven hours we fought the storm while the dogs dragged us miles out into the frozen Arctic Ocean.

Our situation grew serious and I realized that Jim's vaunted sense of location was not standing him in good stead on this trip. We halted for a conference. Jim believed that we had passed the place, but it seemed to me impossible. So when he insisted on going back over our trail, I demurred, declaring that I would do one of two things — either keep moving ahead, or do what Stefansson warns Arctic travellers is best in such instances — stop and dig in for shelter until the storm passes.

The upshot of our argument was that we left it to the dogs. The wind slightly abated and the animals started forward. After being eighteen hours on the trail we arrived, famished and frozen, at a reindeer camp, where I obtained two extra dogs. The following day we reached Bar-

row. Here Charlie Brower gave us a royal welcome and after we thawed out we held a feast among ourselves.

We stayed at Barrow for a week while Charlie and Jim discussed business and checked up on supplies.

During this time I made several visits to that part of the Point where the original settlement was made. And I also called upon Dr. Greist, the head of the Presbyterian Mission there. I found him extremely affable and very much of a scholar. He was wise in the ways of the natives. We discussed many questions concerning their racial peculiarities and I profited by his explanations.

An outstanding feature of my Barrow trip was to learn from Brower about a remarkable migration and wholesale self-destruction of lemmings which took place in May, 1888, during the "flaw whaling" season. Millions of those little creatures came from the interior, passed out upon the ice until the sea was reached, and then plunged into the water and were drowned. For miles and miles along the shore they floated dead in great windrows. Cakes of ice literally covered with their bodies drifted to and fro.

*Labor  
Troubles*

The return trip from Barrow was made without difficulty and we managed to get in ahead of another storm.

Most of the natives, I found, had left for the interior. Kivalina and Aguvaluk, with various members of their families, many of whom were to appear in my movie, had scattered through the country. I determined to make an effort at locating them. With a native boy as guide I loaded up enough provisions to last an Eskimo family for two weeks, and started off.

We had not been long out of Wainwright when our dogs began to strain at their harness and to leap violently. I thought they had picked up the scent of a polar bear or some other animal. But the scent proved to be that of Eskimos returning to Wainwright, who were driving three reindeer sleds.

The husky dogs are enemies of the reindeer and the approaching natives were forced to halt some distance away from us. The native boy and I trudged over to them. Behold — there were Kivalina and Aguvaluk and the rest of my cast headed back to Wainwright despite my agreement that they would remain in the interior so that I could make pictures of them. Interior

scenes were vitally necessary if the continuity of my story was to be retained.

The deserting natives informed me that they were out of food and must get back to the trading post. "Ah," I thought, "my foresight in bringing along supplies will solve the matter." But it didn't. They intimated that there wasn't enough food. I offered to dispatch a sled back to the post for added stores. Still the natives demurred. They must get back to the Post, they insisted.

Then it began to dawn on me that a gentleman of color was secreting himself in the wood-pile. For an hour the natives and I held a parley. Through close questioning I learned they had been ordered back by Jim! The natives said he told them that he wanted them to go whaling. But I knew that the ice would be late in breaking up. I couldn't puzzle the situation out at that time; I was more interested in getting the group to say that they would stay with me.

I succeeded by playing the well-known American game of bluff. I recalled to the natives their promise to work with me and I told them, with as stern an expression as possible on my face, that I would punish them if they broke their contract. The Eskimos had no wish to offend me and neither had they the slightest wish to offend Jim, their lord and master. But my

bluff convinced them, for the moment, that the safest thing to do was to stick with me. When they decided to return to the reindeer camp, I dispatched a native with a sled to Wainwright, carrying an order for supplies. With the order went back a note curtly demanding that Jim honor it.

Then the natives turned with us inland and in a few hours we arrived at their camp. When we crawled in that night there were eighteen of us jammed together. My supplies immediately underwent an assault. In a few hours the seventeen natives had eaten every morsel! And I had been rash enough to think that I was carrying a two weeks' supply for the family! How they ate! They simply crammed down the food. At last when my provisions vanished they were forced to return to the seal oil and frozen meat. And while they licked their fingers they told me they still were hungry.

The next morning I woke up feeling fit. I mentally patted myself on the back for the persuasiveness of my speech on the previous day and I had visions of actually beginning the movie. With an expression of cheer and kindness I started out to round up my cast of characters. I got no farther than the starting point. The natives refused to budge. Inwardly fuming I questioned them over and over again and almost

begged them to work. "Atchookee," "Pee-chuk," "Atchoo" — meaning "No," "not," and "nothing" were the only answers. After an hour of this I was beginning to believe that the native language consisted of "Atchookee," entirely. Even Aguvaluk was adamant. "Sorry, atchoo," was all he said. One or two declared that they wouldn't work for food.

The real reason of their sulkiness I finally learned when I caught one of them trying to sneak back to Wainwright. He was harnessing a deer to his sled. Realizing that if I weakened for a moment and permitted him to go it would be hopeless to attempt to force the other natives to remain, I stood in front of the headstrong Eskimo and glared at him. I told him that he must positively stay with me and hinted at all sorts of trouble for him if he disobeyed. He replied that Jim had also threatened him with punishment if he remained. Knowing that Jim, on occasion, had used a high hand with these people, I now launched a barrage of threats.

The Eskimo weakened. He decided to stay. He told me it would be several days before the provisions arrived by reindeer sled. This was unfortunately true. The reindeer is a hardy animal, but slow on the trail. He requires a certain amount of rest after eating, and if he is not allowed that rest, he just lies down in his



tracks. The reindeer may be the camel of the Arctic; he also has a strong claim to being the Arctic mule.

I decided to let matters rest until the provisions came. For three days the natives sulked. I paid no attention to them and their sulkiness increased. On the third day the provisions arrived from the Post.

The man bringing them, I was told later by Aguvaluk, also brought a message from Jim which was for the natives alone. The message was to the effect that unless the Eskimos returned at once Jim was coming after them.

This message and the provisions had a double effect on the natives. They were thankful to me for the food and wanted to work for me, but their fear of Jim was increased.

I waited until they had glutted themselves again with food and then went before them with another powerful appeal. It had its effect, and I made the first shots of my picture. Much elated I now approached Kivalina, urging her to pose.

Vanity, thy name is woman! My Eskimo star produced a display of temperament which, for pure devilishness, out-deviled any temperament indulged in by her artistic sisters of civilized lands.

*The Temperamental  
Star*

Kivalina became coy. I would fix the braids on her head a certain way. My leading woman promptly switched about and arranged the braids to suit herself. I posed her full face in front of the camera. "But no, we artists must have our way," insisted the heroine, and at the crucial moment ducked her head. I argued, stormed, protested, and cursed. Would Kivalina be reasonable? Of course she wouldn't! The storm broke.

How dare I think that she, Kivalina, after making solemn contracts with me and eating my food, would not do as she had said? How dare I? Me, a stupid director who knew nothing of art and far less of her soul!

So throughout, I was forced to believe from her actions, that this Arctic belle and peer of Eskimo artists, Kivalina, considered herself the queen of the Polar Hollywood.

Several days passed thus, Kivalina still persisting in her stubbornness. Finally, I learned the reason for her temperamental pyrotechnics. It was this:

My leading lady had been in the audience that had witnessed the dancing African Kaffirs. She had laughed, with the others, at the strange



KIVALINA, A TEMPERAMENTAL STAR



appearance of those naked black men. She claimed I had held the magic picture spirits up to ridicule, and therefore, some day, when I had finished making magic pictures of her, I would take them to the naked black men so that they could laugh in return!

I promised that no one would laugh at her, and I told her when I carried her pictures to the land of the white men that all its people would gaze at her likeness and call it beautiful. No, she wasn't going to be fooled by my cajolings.

At length I offered her calico, flour, coffee, bread, and gum-drops. This offer, it appeared, was reasonable, and she would think it over. In the meantime, I talked daily to Aguvaluk and urged him to add his persuasion to the bounty of my offer.

Gum-drops and calico finally overcame a proud spirit. Kivalina gave her consent to be photographed. Tomorrow, she said, she would pose.

Contrary to the observations of wise-crackers and philosophers tomorrow came. And how I wish it hadn't!

*Trouble that  
comes in battalions*

After making a tour of the vicinity, that morning, I returned to the igloo. In front of it, sit-

ting, or rather, rolling, was an Eskimo boy about six years old. From a distance, he appeared to be struggling with a snake — an infant Hercules strangling one of the serpents.

But he was not fighting a snake. The sinuous coils were 400 feet of the film I had taken of the *Aurora Borealis*! Bits of the celluloid had been broken off and were being blown into the tundra and across it by a sharp wind!

Snatching what was left of the film I crawled in through the house tunnel to make an examination. My worst fears were realized. Somehow, the child had broken into a box in which I had carefully placed the tin film containers (I had imagined they were safer with me than at Wainwright). The container marked "*Aurora — 400 feet*" was the one that had been broken open. In another container there were left eighty feet of the *Aurora* pictures. After all my months of weary waiting, that was all that I was able to bring back to the United States.

There is a story that when Sir Isaac Newton had just completed one of his great theses, representing years of labor, his dog, Diamond, jumped on a table and overturned a candle which set fire to and consumed the priceless manuscript. Sir Isaac, with melancholy eyes, gazed at the dog and sweetly said: "*Diamond, you don't know what you have done*" — or words to that effect.

I wish to assure my readers that no such forgiving utterance found its way to my lips nor did such kindly thoughts "sweeten" my brain. I spoke and acted in an exactly opposite manner. Here was the work of night after night of frozen torture irrevocably lost. A child had destroyed the only reproductions of Nature's most gorgeous phenomena!

I became possessed with an unreasonable anger, but I knew I must soften my mood when I spoke to the natives. I thought that when they realized what had happened they would be sympathetic toward me and really work for me in compensation.

They were sympathetic but they declined to work! They said they were afraid that they themselves might blunder at their work and precipitate another similar catastrophe upon me.

Several days slipped by at this impasse. My irritability increased until the Eskimos actually avoided me. Such slow nursing of wrath proved a God-send. The natives grew afraid. They feared that the "man who hunts with a box" might, at any moment, go mad from anger and visit physical violence upon them. Jim's future vengeance seemed small in comparison to immediate punishment.

At last they declared that they were willing to help me and we set to work in earnest. I deter-

mined to "shoot" first the scene wherein Aguvaluk, as had actually happened to him in real life, was buried by snow in an igloo after seeking refuge in it during a blizzard.

*"On Location"*

We built a snow house and the hero crawled into it. Then some of the natives and I walled it up. At our signal shout the Eskimo actor was to cut his way out, just as he had done when it really was a matter of life and death.

The scene being set and the camera primed, we shouted and waited a moment. There were no signs of Aguvaluk attempting to deliver himself. After a dozen shouts we realized that we had sealed the shelter so successfully it was sound-proof. If we walked closer to the house we would make footprints around it and that would look rather "stagey" to the future movie fans who were to see the escape just as it had occurred.

The difficulty was solved by digging a tunnel to the house, at an angle and out of range of the camera. One of the natives crawled through this to give the word to the hero.

After the young man had cut his way through he was reminded that the snow had covered his sled and that his reindeer had disappeared during the storm. Aguvaluk floundered out of the



igloo and without looking about headed in the direction of the imaginary deer.

“No! No!” I screamed. He halted. Then, in broken English and bent Eskimo I attempted to explain to him that he was to come out of the house and to register absolute consternation. After that, he was to hunt through the snow, find a snow drift, and there register that he had ascertained the direction from which the wind was blowing during the storm, and was then to set out for the deer. The deer, as I have mentioned, always travel in the teeth of the storm. And I was endeavoring to show how an Eskimo uses a drift as a snow-compass.

During this prayerful explanation I had been walking up and down and flinging my arms about in disgust at Eskimo stupidity.

When I snapped my fingers and gave Aguvalluk the sign that he was to proceed with his “acting,” he flung his arms up and gnashed his teeth, in perfect imitation of me, before he started to hunt for the drift, his “snow-compass.”

In these uncalled-for imitations of me he had tracked up the snow in front of the igloo. There was nothing to do but build another snow house and act it all over again.

*The Leading  
Man Shaves*

Tribulation seemed to come from all sides. Owing to my serious shortage of film such incidents as Aguvaluk's adventure with my razor were almost tragic.

One very cold morning I sent Tuktu out of the house to get snow to melt so I might have water for shaving. The moisture from my breath froze and formed ice which clung to the beard and smarted, so I shaved almost daily.

Tuktu returned with the snow and watched me use the razor. The tonsorial operation fascinated him. When I finished he asked me for the razor. I was highly in favor of anything that would preserve amicable relations between myself and the natives so I gave it to him. (I had another with me.) Then I asked Tuktu to get some more snow, so I could wash my face.

He departed, with the razor in one hand. A few minutes passed and there was no sign of either Tuktu or the snow. I went out to investigate. I found the boy in Aguvaluk's hut. My hero was there and so was Kivalina. Aguvaluk had the razor in one hand and was gazing curiously at it.

He glanced up at Kivalina. She nodded. I

yelled. Too late. With one fell swoop, Aguvaluk had shaved off one side of his mustache!

Now, in all the scenes I had "shot" of Aguvaluk he was wearing a mustache on both sides of his upper lip. It would be ridiculous to show him in the next scenes with only half of his mustache. And it must take several weeks at least for the hairy adornment to return to its pristine glory. I raged, while Kivalina complacently said that I should take pictures of her sweetheart without a mustache since I had already taken some pictures with it.

Looking very much like a child who has been caught in the act of stealing jam and is half ashamed over his sin, and half proud of his boldness, Aguvaluk hung his head.

*I Combat  
Native  
Superstition*

An efficient Arctic motion-picture director must be, I was to learn, an adept at necromancy. He must be able, at almost any old time, to hold fervid conversations with the spirits of dead animals.

A short time after the episodes with Aguvaluk I attempted to film the picture of a native boy finding a fox in a trap. Now this fox-finding

was supposed to mean a great deal to this particular native, as the scenes depicted a period of starvation, and I wanted the Eskimo to be highly elated at the unexpected catch.

My actor listened carefully to my instructions. Then, with an air of complete boredom, he sauntered nonchalantly to the trap, casually inspected the fox, and with extreme *ennui* written in his face, lifted the animal out.

“No, no, no!” I thundered. “You’re happy! you’re excited! you must grab the fox, hold it aloft in pride. Remember, when you get back to Jim’s you can get tobacco, flour and gum-drops for it! You must act excited!”

The native somehow managed to understand that I wanted him to “play” with the fox. He shook his head. Last year, he explained, another young Eskimo boy caught a fox. It was his first fox. He felt proud of himself and toyed with the fox. He played with it and threw it about in derision. Now the spirit of that dead fox, it seemed, was angry at being treated with such abandon, and therewith went out and spoke to all the live foxes. The effect was, my native solemnly avowed, that all the live foxes carefully avoided his friend’s traps.

I listened patiently. “Now, Tuktu,” I said in a fatherly tone, “If I talk to the spirit of this dead fox and tell him that you are obeying the

wish of the good White Man by playing with him, won't that be all right?"

Tuktu declared it would be "nu-ku-ruk" (meaning "all right") if I really could talk to the spirit of the fox. I assured him that for years and years it had been my nightly habit to commune with the spirits of fallen Reynards.

Taking the late Mr. Fox in my hands I stroked it and mumbled earnestly in its ear. When this was finished, I placed the fox's mouth against my own ear and listened intently. Thereupon I assured Tuktu that everything was "nu-ku-ruk" now. The picture proceeded, Tuktu playing the fox with gusto.

Thus, despite trials great and small, the film began to take shape. One lesson I learned was that the Eskimos have no idea of the validity of a contract. When they didn't want to work, they didn't work. But they ate my food. They were hungry. Their pay, they believed, should keep on whether or not their work did.

### *The Great Reindeer Trek*

The spring deer roundup was on. During the whole time I was filming my story vast herds of reindeer had been assembling for the drive

toward the coast, and thousands of them were gathered around our camp.

On a given day all the deer belonging to the seventeen natives in my company were collected and with them we started back to Wainwright. I essayed the rôle of directing the start so that I could record it with the camera. It was quite a task. The natives were impatient but I managed to induce them to bunch the thousands of animals and hold them in check.

Before attempting this, an evolution doubly difficult because I spoke the language only partially — it was a task which really needed several directors and half a dozen cameramen — I photographed the activities of the natives in breaking camp.

The Eskimo, wherever he goes, carries with him virtually everything he owns. The four houses in the camp were aligned on a knoll. I set my camera so its lens would catch the front of each house and I recorded the natives crawling out of the tunnels with a staggering amount of equipment.

Wishing to obtain a long shot of both natives and deer I mounted a knoll on the opposite side of the small valley, and photographed the deer who were milling and straining, and the natives, ready for the trek, lined up behind them with heavily burdened sleds.

Then I ran a distance ahead with my camera. I signalled to the drivers and they urged the animals forward. Grunting and milling, the beasts stampeded toward me while I ground the crank. Intent on picture-taking, I forgot the proximity of the herd and very nearly permitted myself to be trampled to death. A yell from the native boy aroused me and I barely managed to save myself with the camera.

I wanted of course to obtain various views of the great drive so I ran about, shooting from this angle and that, getting close-ups, side views, rear views, and all the rest. My running about greatly amused the natives. Surely, they thought, "The White Man who hunts with the box" is quite mad.

The sleds were so heavily loaded with personal possessions and the skins of animals caught in the traps, that only the youngest of the children could ride. The sleds were hauled by deer. Men and women led the animals or helped push the sleds. Kivalina walked along tugging at a reindeer rein while an Eskimo baby, belonging to a kinswoman, was snuggled against her back beneath her parka.

Some of the sleds were moved by ingenious methods. The old story of the boy riding on the donkey's back and holding in front of its nose an apple suspended from a stick was equalled by

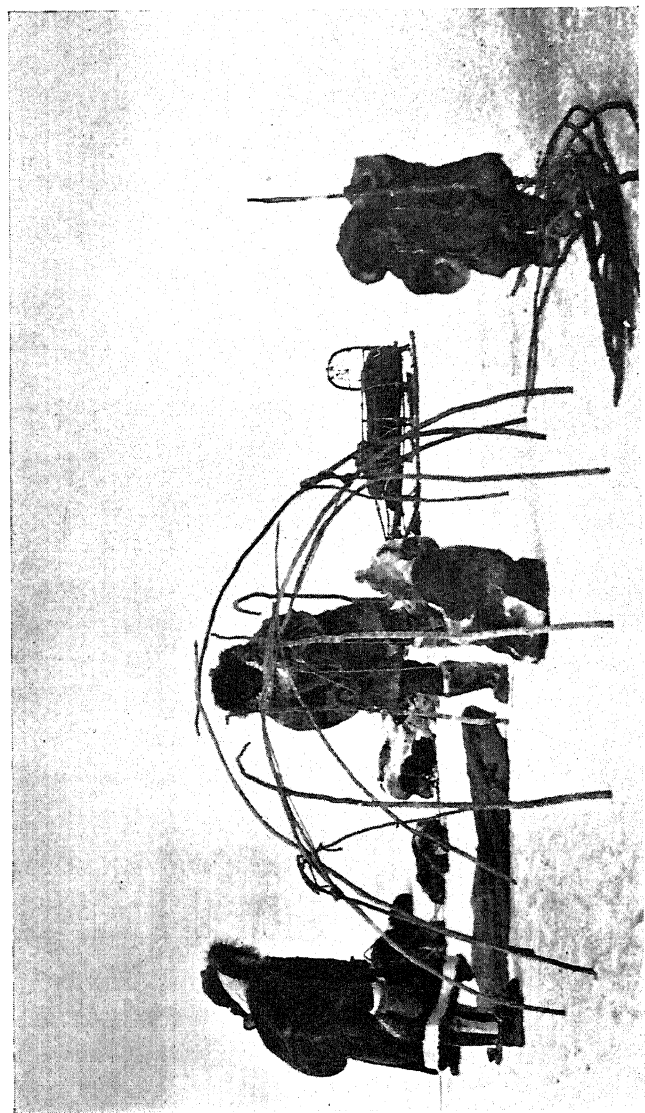
one family. They hitched a deer to the front of the sled to draw it, and on the side, near the back, out of reach of the deer, an Eskimo dog. Eskimo dogs, as I have already pointed out, do not like reindeer. The dog did his utmost, leaping toward the deer and straining at his leash. The reindeer, hearing the dog's constant angry barking, pulled all the harder. While, to be certain that every ounce of power was attained, a native pulled the deer and an old woman pushed the sled from the extreme rear.

The Eskimos carried willow boughs and skins on their sleds and with these they made shelters every night, the boughs being stuck in the ground in a circle and then tied at the top with thongs. Over this the skins were spread forming a tent.

Travel with the deer was slow and unpleasant. There was an infernal din — the grunting of the thousands of animals, the incessant scratching of countless hoofs on ice, the snapping of tendons, the ceaseless yapping of the furious little Lapp dogs, the screeching of sled-runners on snow, and the yells of the Eskimos.

It took six weeks for deer to travel the one hundred miles between the interior camp and Wainwright. After a few hours' going, the natives would halt so the deer could rest and eat. Fifty fawns were born daily and it was necessary





BUILDING AN ESKIMO SHELTER IN REINDEER SEASON



to stop frequently. I was thus presented with an unusual chance to obtain human-interest animal pictures. I have seen a female deer give birth to a fawn, and two hours later the mother and offspring would be back on the trail and moving with alacrity. During the fawning time the native is useful chiefly in checking up on the fawns and counting them, and in keeping the herd intact. Every moment some animal would stray from the herd, and the natives and Lapp dogs go chasing after it.

I stayed on the trail with the deer for several days, living at night in the skin shelter where with some protection over me I could write my notes, and each day making fresh shots of new phases of the roundup.

At last, however, I decided to hasten on to Wainwright. I therefore went ahead of the others, reaching there a few weeks before the herders. When the herd is pretty well in hand and the fawning time over, it is customary for all but the herders to leave. A week after I returned only the herders were still on the trail.

To my surprise, when I reached the trading post, I was greeted effusively by Jim. I returned the greeting and at once questioned him concerning statements of the natives that he had threatened them when they failed to return from the interior. The trader absolutely denied

making those threats and laid the whole story to an Eskimo's "pipe dream." I let the matter rest.

*Arctic  
Yarns*

It was great to be "home" where one could hear some intelligible conversation. Jim's wit had always delighted me and he commanded an endless fund of good stories. Some of these had to do with his prowess in hunting, others pictured more hilarious aspects of whaling ventures. Two at least are worth recounting.

Years ago, it seems, when Jim was in his prime, he harpooned the famous Whistling Whale, an unusual leviathan that for generations was a by-word among whalers.

Every whaler could tell of the time when, one night out of the darkness, there came a shrill, eerie whistle and a monster whale loomed up to spout a huge jet and then to disappear with a sea-churning flirt of a coy and prodigious tail. When whalers got together to swap yarns they discovered that this whale had traversed the seven seas, although for a long time the animal was thought to keep himself in the vicinity of Wrangel Island.

When Jim sounded the mammal's death knell with his keen singing harpoon the Whistling

Whale's secret was disclosed. Already imbedded in the whale they found a harpoon dated more than a hundred years earlier, and marked "Nar-whal," evidently from a Danish ship of that name. The old harpoon had stuck in the animal's blow-hole and this obstruction produced the whistle when it spouted.

The second yarn, which he especially enjoyed and told with much relish, concerned "Dutchie" and "Red." Both were whalers and they hated each other; they had been quarrelling for years. Fate almost invariably threw them together on the same vessel. Some maintained there was a curious sort of affection between them despite the fact that each cursed the other constantly, and was ready to fight on any occasion.

The two friendly enemies were stranded at Point Barrow the year that Lopp and Captain Jarvis of the Coast Guard made their memorable drive of reindeer from the edge of the Arctic Circle at Kotzebue to bring food 'on the hoof' to the supposedly starving sailors.

Upon arrival, Captain Jarvis took command of the situation and established a camp. It was a rude affair, with the stranded sailors sleeping three abreast or aback in tiers of bunks in a frame shack. Jarvis put the camp on a sanitary basis and each man was given certain work. One of the orders was that every Saturday night each

man was to melt snow and give himself a good bath. Despite much grumbling the order in general was carried out. "Dutchie" and "Red," however, held no regard for the adage that Cleanliness is next to Godliness. Cleanliness to them was next to nothing.

At this point of the tale, Jim, who was one of the stranded sailors and was an eyewitness of the succeeding episodes, became almost convulsed with laughter, but finally, with much gesticulation and profanity, as used by the principals, completed the tale.

Captain Jarvis, he went on to say, well aware that "Dutchie" and "Red" thought water good for little else but to sail ships on and run under bridges, decided to take matters in hand. One day he summoned "Dutchie" and told him to order "Red" to melt snow and pour it into one of the tin tubs. "Dutchie," delighted at being able to give orders to "Red," did so in an imperial manner. "Red" cursed but obeyed and filled the tub. Then both were summoned before Capt. Jarvis. "Dutchie," barked the Captain, "You are ordered to give 'Red' a bath. Here are some brushes. Be sure you do a good job." "Dutchie" was in the seventh heaven of delight. In high glee and looking viciously at poor "Red," "Dutchie" threw him roughly into the tub. The brushes were very stiff.

"Dutchie," with strong fingers, applied them to "Red's" back. "Red" cursed and squirmed and begged that "Dutch" go easy. Grinning maliciously, "Dutchie" declared that he must obey orders and make a good job of it and proceeded to do just that. The Swede (although he was called "Dutchie") applied himself so conscientiously that "Red's" howlings aroused the camp. The sailors (Jim among them) crowded about the tub and cheered "Dutchie" to more vigorous efforts while they laughed in high joy at "Red," who now was too weak to utter protest.

Half an hour later "Dutchie" led "Red" before Jarvis. "Red" was positively glowing. He looked as if he had been toasted over a slow burner. His skin flamed and smarted. Capt. Jarvis carefully inspected "Dutchie's" handiwork. After that inspection Jarvis then ordered — "Now, 'Red,' you give 'Dutchie' a bath!"

Stunned and utterly dismayed, "Dutchie" avowed himself to be perfectly capable of cleaning himself. But Capt. Jarvis was firm. A devilish light gleamed in "Red's" eyes and without more ado he collared "Dutchie" and, reversing the situation, flung him into the tub. Surrounded by a yelling, jeering audience, "Dutchie" was subjected to an historical scrubbing. His howls and imprecations far exceeded

"Red's" in noise and vigor, but "Red's" strength exceeded "Dutchie's" and the bath continued. "Red" showed no heart but he displayed a powerful pair of hands. When "Red" was almost exhausted and his hands and arms ached, "Dutchie" was brought before Capt. Jarvis. "Dutchie" was in a pitiable state. His flesh was simply crimson. Tears poured from his eyes and he was still cursing and vowing eternal vengeance on the grinning "Red."

Marsayas, the fabled Greek who was flayed alive by the gods, was not, according to Jim's description, more roughly handled than "Dutchie." After that both whalers took their bath regularly!

*Return of  
Porter, the  
Half-Breed*

Beside the delight of Jim's yarns I found an old acquaintance at Wainwright — George Porter, the half-Eskimo bos'n of the *Boxer*, the "Jeff" to Boxcar Slim's classic "Mutt."

George, smiling, and rather pleased by the evident surprise he created, told me his story. When the *Boxer* touched at Wainwright the North lured him. In his nostrils was the smell of seal-oil; he felt the urge of the hunt for food. The "call of the wild" came to him loudly



through the primitive half of his soul, and the Eskimo triumphed over his white blood.

Sociologists might write volumes about the conflict in the bos'n's mind. Torn between civilization and barbarism George Porter reverted to the stronger type. He deserted the *Boxer* and vanished into the interior while my belongings were being dumped upon the beach.

Guided by instinct more than by reason, he followed the trail to the people of his native mother, a rude tribe that fought for life behind the coast.

Just as the half-breed Indian reverts to his blanket, George went back to his parka and his blubber. He hunted the late seal that winter. He joined in the primitive customs, and listened to the oft-repeated tales about the ten-legged polar bear. Forgotten for a time were the letters of the civilized world, and instead, he rudely carved his native-life story on the bow.

After months of this, the glamour of civilization rose before his eyes. The Eskimos were hungry, and George was hungry, too. The flesh-pots of the white man loomed before him. He deserted the tribe and hurried to Wainwright where he knew he would find food. On his arrival he talked with Jim Allen, who hired him for the whale hunt.

I was delighted with the prospect of having

Porter at hand. He understood English and, I thought, would be a Heaven-sent intermediary between me and the natives. But that did not prove true!

*The Eskimo  
Whale-Hunt*

Wainwright buzzed like a bee-hive now. Everyone was busy. Preparations were under-way for the annual whale-hunt.

The whale-hunt is the yearly climax in Eskimo life. From these huge mammals are obtained, in the largest quantities, blubber and oil and food delicacies. Every possible preparation to secure the success of the hunt is made. Even the children work. I watched an umiak, or whaling canoe, being constructed. The women sat beside the driftwood framework, sewing seal-skins together to cover the hull. Some of them were splitting reindeer sinew for thread. Others were making the seal-boot used for whaling. This boot is made waterproof by the mere excellence of the sewing, oil being used even on the seams. Oars for the umiak were fashioned from driftwood. The old canoes were carefully patched and strengthened with extra skins. Fur garments were mended.

I had obtained a number of pictures of whaling-hunt preparations. The natives were almost

ready. And yet Jim failed to reissue his invitation to join him on the hunt. Nevertheless I went ahead, making my own preparations. My garments were repaired and I ordered a pair of water-proof boots. Maggie was again my boot-maker, but this time, after she cut the soles, it was Kivalina who crimped them with her teeth.

I overhauled my picture apparatus and laid in a plentiful store of tobacco, food, sweets, tea, and other necessities.

*April 26.* Today the first umiak left the village to find an open lead in the roof of the frozen ocean. At the last minute Jim invited me to join him. It took me but a trifling time to dump my equipment into the umiak. We were off! Six weeks of high adventure, biting monotony, alternate disappointment and hope lay ahead of me out there on the ice.

The umiak, thirty feet long, was lashed on top of a sled about twelve feet, and was heavily laden. In it were complete food supplies for both men and beasts, paddles, skins, a canvas tent, poles, harpoons, Jim's old brass whaling gun, an old Yukon stove, tins of kerosene, a Primus stove with pieces of crates and packing boxes for extra fuel, rifles and my cameras.

The crew consisted of eight natives, Jim's picked men, headed by Aguvaluk as chief harpooner. The burdened sled was drawn by nine

dogs. When we left Wainwright, the remainder of the village came down to the beach and cheered us as we "took off."

At the very outset of the trip I realized how arduous it would be. Before reaching the ocean proper we were forced to cross the pressure ridge of ice, about two hundred feet in height. The going was terrific. The dogs struggled bravely, dragging the canoe-weighted sled. On the sides of the canoe were eight sinew thongs. There was a man harnessed to each, and two men in the rear. We pulled and pushed mightily, helping the dogs. When both men and beasts were exhausted at the top of the pressure ridge, we were forced to pull in on the thongs with what little strength we could muster to prevent the sled from toppling down on the dogs as we negotiated the abrupt descent.

At the bottom we rested for a few moments, as we were forced to do many times during the day, not only for our own benefit but because of the animals! The rests were short, only giving time enough for the natives to brew tea and to smoke while Jim and I drank hot chocolate from a thermos bottle.

The spirit of the chase was present in all. It got into my veins, too, and I found myself making every possible effort to push the sled toward an open lead and whale. Whale! Here would

be a fine chance for a spectacular picture. A motion picture of the bow-head whale, largest of living mammals, the Balaena of the Romans, the Leviathan of the Bible! My eyes danced with visions of myself grinding a camera crank while the harpoon whizzed through the air and imbedded itself in the thick skin of the sea-monster.

My ardor was unbroken by the difficulties of the journey. We pushed, hauled, pulled, tugged, and dragged the canoe and sled over one ice obstacle after the other. Over old ice, and green ice, over hummocks and over level ice, through tortuous passages and over the sheerest of new-born ice, when we could feel it give beneath the load. At any moment, on the newly formed ice, we might be precipitated into the Arctic Ocean. But the dangerous ice meant nothing to us. The Eskimos were seeking their whale, and I was seeking adventure!

In all of this exploit Jim Allen rose to sheer heights. He was a great ice man. The natives knew it and respected him accordingly. When the ice lay horribly thin beneath us and even the dogs hesitated, Jim would bellow out:

“Keep going! Keep moving — keep ahead!”

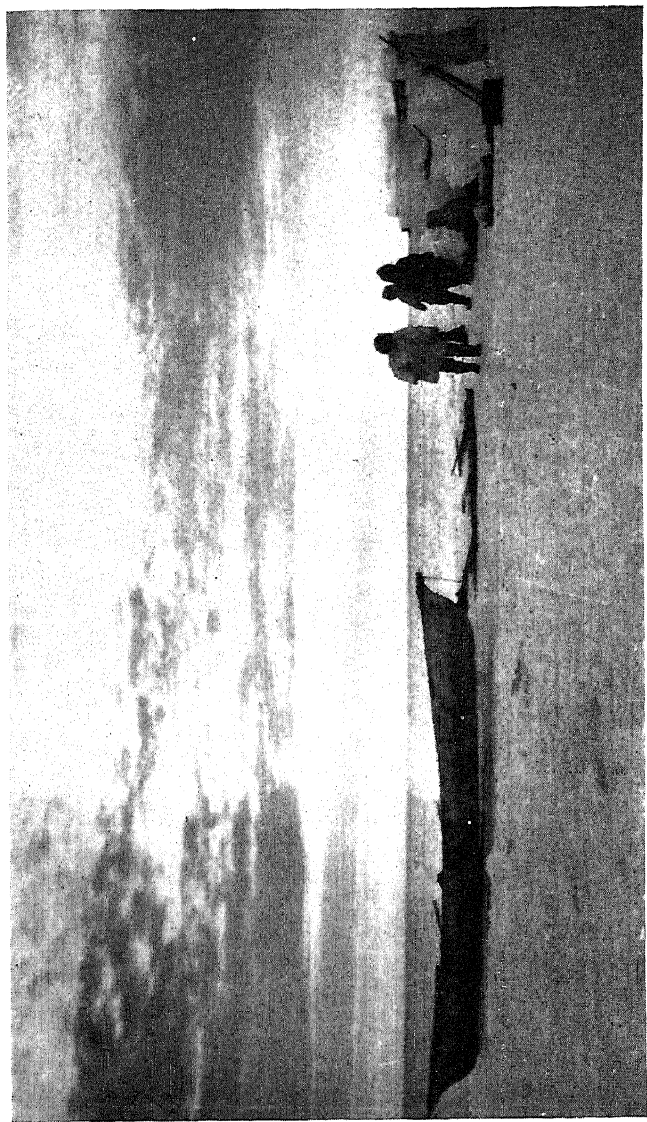
And we responded by racing the loads across.

Soon the party was some miles out on the ocean. We passed over huge hills where the laboring sea had buckled up in revolt and we

traversed floes smooth and blue with age. Safely we crossed fields of white, treacherous, new ice. Sometimes level ice extended for a mile ahead and beyond we could see a flash and glimmer. Soon, perhaps, I thought, we should reach open water. But when we came to the glint we found it the thinnest of young ice where the sea had just frozen. At other times we crossed ice ridges jumbled into pinnacles, broken cakes, crevices, and elevations. Through this we were forced to cut a path for the dogs, with harpoon heads and ice picks. In eight hours we made ten miles. All of us were completely exhausted. Still there was no open lead, or water, in sight. We pitched camp. The canvas tent was spread. We threw skins on the ice beneath it and relaxed. Then came food. Besides the seal meat and other food essentials, Jim Allen had brought along the canned delicacies which he so dearly loved.

That night while it was many degrees below zero, and we were ten miles out in the Arctic Ocean, Jim and I ate "hot dogs." The trader had a passion for them and had many cans of frankfurters with him. Beside such dainties, Jim had prepared at Wainwright, a quantity of food. Reindeer stew and beans, in abundance, had been cooked and frozen, before we left. This stuff was melted, and we "fell to."

A mixture I learned to enjoy was frozen beans



THE WHALING CAMP





that were thawed out, to which hot bacon-gravy was added — Arctic ambrosia.

When we crawled into the tent to sleep I thought I should have a wretched night but I found that reindeer skins are very warm; I could not complain, although a sharp wind was stinging across the ocean.

The next morning, some of the natives went farther out on the ice looking for an open lead. The search proved vain even though it continued for several days.

Wahluk, the famous polar bear hunter, who had joined us, upheld his reputation by bagging a bear and a cub, so the camp feasted on fresh meat. Nevertheless there was general disappointment. The spring season promised to be as late as the winter had been hard.

Our luck ran quite out with a brewing storm. Fearing the wind would break up the ice behind us and cut off our means of retreat to land, we were obliged to double back on our trail and get within striking distance of the shore.

Our fears were not realized. The storm was severe but the ice held like adamant. We pushed out again and kept a constant search for an open lead or water lane, as we zig-zagged many weary miles dragging the heavy sledge and canoe.

The sun was in the sky almost constantly now and I expected to be able to spend a greater part

of my time with my camera. But here again I experienced difficulty with the natives, especially with George Porter who proved to be a very irritating thorn in my side. When we were moving about the ice I wanted to photograph the Eskimos at work hauling the sled, breaking camp, making and cooking meals, etc. At this the natives grumbled. When we came to a particularly bad stretch of ice I stopped to get shots showing how hard the natives were obliged to work in helping the dogs haul the sled. My companions objected again. They claimed that as a member of the crew I should be devoting all my efforts to dragging the sled, and not in foolishly "hunting with the box." There was justice in the argument, but I had to make my photographs and so was forced to risk their displeasure.

While grinding the camera crank I could hear the men mutter to themselves as they pushed and pulled over the rough ice. When the murmuring got on my nerves I passed out gum-drops and other sweets and cigarettes. This would allay their displeasure until the next time. And then more cigarettes would be given. Fortunately and peculiarly I had lost my taste for cigarettes when we got out on the ice. I found solace in another form of tobacco. It was lucky that I did because the natives were fast eating and smoking their way through my tobacco supplies.

George Porter proved impervious to gifts. The bos'n knew the white man's ways and he realized that my pictures of the natives would show them to be a crude, almost barbarous race. My reasoning that the film would arouse interest in the people, and eventually bring both commercial and social benefits to them, did not impress him. On numerous occasions George told the Eskimos to turn their backs on me after I had focused the camera. Any attempt to picture them eating raw meat, cooking the native food, or dipping into the communal bowl, aroused his ire.

*The Beat .  
of Wings*

*May.* At this time of year the Arctic offers many items of interest which have nothing to do with its people.

During all the weeks I was on the ice a continual flight of fowl crossed the sky. Millions of them passed over us. First came the king eider ducks, then the Pacific eiders, followed by turns, gulls, and many other species. All day and all night long their sharp cries and the steady brush of wings were heard. They came in flocks of between two thousand and five thousand. At times their numbers were so great that they obscured the sun.

The flight of birds was fascinating. Sometimes I would watch them for hours. They flew in wedge-shape, with a leader a few yards in front. Suddenly, as if at command, they would wheel and dip as one and then, as suddenly, nose up again high above the ice.

The natives employed an ingenious method in capturing these birds. A long thong, weighted at both ends, was thrown into the air when the birds flew low. The weighted thong generally struck some bird and wound about its head, leg or wing. Down came the helpless victim, to be put, forthwith, into the pot.

My endeavors to learn how the bird was prepared for the pot met with rebuffs from George Porter. Later, by carefully examining some duck soup, I found that the bird was skinned, the head, bones and entrails all being thrown into the soup pot. I discovered this only after I had eaten of the mess several times!

All flew north. This led Jim and me into many discussions concerning the probability of land between Point Barrow and the mathematical North Pole. In nearly a thousand-mile stretch of unexplored territory there might be land somewhere. Some think there are small islands, others a large island or archipelago. For a continent, of course, there is not enough room.

The birds fly north and return with fledglings.

It is argued, therefore, that they must find some place in that mysterious stretch where there is food and nesting, for surely that is not done on the ice!

The other reasons are that the prevailing Arctic winds indicate high land existing in the neighborhood of the Pole of Inaccessibility, the point which really does occupy the unique position which it used to be supposed belonged to the North Pole; the Inaccessible Pole is at the centre of the floating Arctic ice, while the North Pole is several hundred miles nearer the edge and therefore much easier to reach.

The Inaccessible Pole, also called the Ice Pole, lies about eight hundred miles out from Barrow in a direction a little west by north. Arctic tides also indicate the presence of a mass of land. It is claimed by some that the pack north of Alaska behaves as if there were land opposite holding it back.

Arctic whalers for years have harbored a strong belief in this land. Some whalers returning from the edge of the ice, reported the appearance of black masses far out which they were sure meant land. These black masses, however, might only be fog banks.

No boat, before the time I was in the Arctic, had ventured out north more than 100 miles from Point Barrow. Farther than this would.

mean death when the great ice-pack surged south. Jim Allen believes there must be land somewhere out there, and from my personal observations I think he is right.

During these days I was learning many points about the ice. I could recognize the new ice from the old by its color, and learned that the top of old ice can be melted and used for drinking water. It is the belief of some that the sun shining steadily on the old ice evaporates part of the salt and the remainder, being heavier than the frozen water, sinks to the bottom, leaving the uppermost crystals free from the saline taste.

“Rubber ice” is the newest of ice. It gives under the feet like rubber and it is dangerous to stay, for any length of time, on such formation. The rubber ice is thin and will break through under protracted weight. My first walk over it reminded me of an amusement contraption at Coney Island where the floor rises, buckles, and starts beneath your feet.

By this time the other canoes — four more, had come from the village. All day and all night long there was an ice-patrol. The natives walked ceaselessly up and down, and scouts were thrown out to look for the prized “open lead.”

*"She blows!  
She blows!"*

*May 17.* At seven o'clock of this day, I was awakened by a startling commotion. Jim Allen's thunderous voice boomed: "Open lead! She blows! She blows! She blows! Make ready the canoe and prepare to haul! She blows! She blows!" His voice was echoed and re-echoed from the hundreds of ice hummocks. It was a thrilling time for me.

Wahluk had been out hunting polar bear and, about five miles north of us, had discovered a sizeable flaw in the ice. He returned immediately with the news. The natives worked like fiends. In half an hour all the camps had been struck, the canoes and sleds hitched up to the dogs and we were off! Jim was in his glory. He ran back and forth, lending a hand here and there and continuously bellowing encouragement to the natives, who, at this juncture, certainly did not need it.

Several hours later, very tired, we arrived at the open lead. We came to it just at the spot in which it had cracked. We were in the apex of the wedge. When we arrived the lead was about six feet wide and as far south as we could see ran a narrow lane of water. We pitched camp and waited. Jim knew that any whale,

travelling that way, would come up when he first struck open water. But no whale came up. We slept restlessly when we slept at all.

At 1:30 in the morning Jim woke me. We had coffee and sardines. Between mouthfuls Jim explained we were going scouting for a "Better 'Ole."

At 2 A.M. we shoved the skin canoe across the open lead and hauled the boat across the ice to the next open water. Here we all got into the boat and started to paddle. Jim had suggested going south but I noticed that the boat went north, and then suddenly swung around in the opposite direction. Jim, who steered the canoe, explained that this is the old-time Eskimo superstition of fooling the bow-heads! (I take it this superstition holds good even among the white whalers of the old school.) I could not help thinking that while all this childish subterfuge was taking place some wise old bow-head might be lying beneath us giving vent to a hearty old whale-laugh.

At 3 A.M. we had our canoe perched on the edge of the polar ice-pack and there we stayed until 11 A.M., with nothing exciting happening. It is a waiting game and requires infinite patience with a thousand-to-one shot that a whale will pop up right in front of you.

I mounted my camera on a pressure ridge





CROSSING AN OPEN LEAD OR WATER LANE THIRTY MILES OUT ON  
THE ARCTIC OCEAN



overlooking the entire scene of operations to get a commanding view. But nothing happened. No one slept, however. All kept patrolling the open water lane for old bow-head to come up and blow. I had to do my share of hauling when the crew dragged the boat over the ice, and paddle it when in the water. Along about noon, after another scouting trip, we portaged across two stretches of ice and canoed the rest of the way to camp when the boat was again set for whaling operations and Jim and I repaired to our tent to get some food and some much-needed sleep. In the midst of our lunch, a signal that whale had been sighted, reached us and we rushed to our positions immediately. Food and sleep did not matter. This was at 1:30 P.M. Ten minutes later the ice broke a mile behind us and we were being carried northward with the polar ice-pack. With the entire village out, whaling groups were strung for five miles along the same lead. A two-shot signal was fired and relayed from camp to camp and instantly the five whaling camps were on the go.

It took less than half an hour to tear down tents, load camp gear into canoe, mount canoe to sled, and with the aid of our half dozen dogs drag the outfit back to safety. Our party was the first to reach the breach which by then was more than one hundred yards wide. Here we

loaded the dogs and sled into the canoe and paddled across. The umiak was full to the gun-  
whales and one had to proceed surely and carefully lest he upset the boat.

Once across, the dogs were harnessed to the sled and our tents and heavy belongings sent farther back, only the most essential things being permitted to remain with us. In the excitement most of our food had vanished, including tobacco and the entire sugar supply.

First to reach safety, I had an opportunity to film the activities of the four other crews. They certainly labored efficiently "in a pinch," and I admired their stoic attitude. To them it was all in the day's work. Our crew, led by Jim Allen, did splendidly. About 6 P.M., after Jim had taken compass bearings to locate our position, he said that if his men would go out, again he thought now was a good chance to strike a whale.

*Hardships at  
the "Better 'Ole"*

Jim felt desperate. The lead was wide, and likely to widen still more; but Jim wanted a whale and decided to go back along the old course, getting farther out on the ice this time. Whales follow a route some distance from shore, so the farther out one goes the better chances

offer of striking the bow-head. I determined to go if Jim did, but I knew he would have trouble in persuading the natives to move for we were all near exhaustion.

"If you order them forward they won't budge. You've got to handle them with gloves," said the trader, and called his crew together for a parley.

Jim made a short speech, dwelling on the exceptional severity of the past winter, the lateness of the spring, and the dire effects of a starvation period. From that speech I gathered that I had experienced one of the longest, stormiest, and coldest Arctic seasons on record, the result being acute food shortage. To go home without a whale would be disastrous, Jim declared, and he wound up by saying:

"Rossman and I are willing to take a chance, and we know you natives are not afraid to follow."

The last subtle argument hit the mark. The Eskimos consented. In a few moments we had paddled across the lead and, hitched like dogs to the sled and canoe, we were portaging north on the dangerous polar ice-pack. All the dogs had been sent shoreward to transport our supplies to a safe place, so that we were now obliged to do their share as well as our own.

At eight o'clock after an exhausted crew had

crossed several stretches of treacherous ice we settled the boat in a likely position and prepared the eternal vigil.

One of the men soon had a pot of coffee ready and Jim and I dined on biscuits and canned cheese. It began to snow and grew colder. Having perspired freely from the exertion of helping pull the boat from place to place in my skin garments, I, like the rest, commenced to shiver. Sleep was out of the question: all through the night I kept watch with the men. The monotony was relieved when, occasionally, a flock of king eider ducks bound north would fly by and the Eskimos would throw missiles at them. They got five that way. During the night they got four seals. The sun kept shining all through the night; it just barely touched the horizon, and then rose. The reflection of the sun across the ice and water and the men skinning seals and partaking of the raw blubber made me think of tales of the North I had read when a boy.

The following notes from my diary will carry our experiences along — they were written on the spot.

*“Monday, May 19th: After forty hours of continued wakefulness and excitement finally had to give up my chance*

of a picture for some much needed rest. Settled down in the slushy snow and was soon sound asleep. Slept for about four hours when suddenly heard the report of a bomb and awakening, dazedly, saw a bow-head disappearing under the ice fifty feet away. Jim told me afterward he was asleep too but had awakened just as the whale popped up in front of him. It spouted a couple of times before he could get his shoulder gun into action and shoot. The hole we were located at, had become covered with slush ice, otherwise the boat would have been shoved out and the whale harpooned.

Bow-head whale is a sensitive creature; the slightest noise and he is out of sight. Had the natives launched the canoe, the scraping of the boat against the ice would have scared the animal off. We had a nibble anyway, although we may sit here a month and never see another.

Everyone sleeps in the clothing he has on and I'm no exception to the rule. When cold we keep moving. When sleeping we take turn about for cat naps. When hungry we nibble at food, if we have any. The natives just now have plenty of seals so it looks as though I will

have to eat seal-meat in the absence of anything else unless we get a chance to cook a duck. This evening about 6:30 o'clock Jim shot two seals. It is now eight P.M., snowing and kind of chilly. I am behind an ice hummock keeping out of the wind to make these notes before memory fails me, my fingers can no longer hold the pencil, they are so numb with cold. Guess I'll exercise now for awhile, to keep warm."

*"Tuesday, May 20th:* Midnight and dead quiet except for the occasional snore of a sleeping Eskimo off watch. It is snowing lightly with a light northeast breeze.

Suddenly came two shots in rapid succession, the sign that the ice had again broken, this time behind our supply base, two miles away. We had to move, and move quickly.

TWO A.M. We reached our main camp only to find that the break in the ice was not very wide, and consequently we were sorry we had been so hasty in flight. Our men had worked like Trojans for many weary hours and needed rest. But Jim knew the whaling season was very short and wanted to make the most of his oppor-



tunity. Again he talked the men into returning to the far ice-pack and its luring lead.

Four A.M. We headed toward the ocean and placed our canoe in a likely spot. The weather was fair but the wind had shifted to the eastward and twelve hours later the ice broke again, this time ten miles behind us. Safety demanded that we get to shore immediately so we pulled up stakes and, weary though we all were, the difficult trip began a third time. For eight hours we pulled and tugged the heavily laden umiak to beyond the danger spot where we dare pitch camp."

"*Wednesday, May 21.* It was two A.M. when we crossed the break in the ice which was only three feet wide and there being no opportunity for any other activity until the ice opened farther, I set my tent in order, left my equipment and supplies on the ice, and drove a dog team through the fog to my camp on shore for some rest and food. Arrived at shore at 4:30 A.M. Jim also came ashore by dog team and we had breakfast on canned cabbage, frankfurters, and coffee. By six A.M. I was sound asleep but was up again at noon, writing and bathing and other-

wise getting the kinks out of my bones, after a rather strenuous trip."

*Black Sunlight*

*June 4.* The sun now remained in the sky twenty-four hours a day. We were come to that monotony of light about which Lopp had spoken. The rays shone so strongly and continuously that in spite of the intense cold, and the many snow storms, Jim and I wore a fine khaki tan.

The polar pack gleamed like a vast diamond as the sun's glare was thrown back from millions and millions of ice particles. I had been freshly warned by Jim and, thanks to my amber goggles, escaped almost scatheless. But to the natives it was "black sunlight"; half of them could not see from snow blindness.

They had their rude Eskimo goggles — a piece of wood with two slits strapped on the head, or a slit piece of soft reindeer hoof. These relieved the strain a little. But such make-shifts are clumsy, and when the natives were prowling along the edge of the lead on the vigil for whale they discarded their goggles. Of course, after weeks in the shimmer and glare, their eyes weakened, they smarted and burned as if hot irons were being applied to the sockets. Constantly falling tears obscured their sight.

George Porter was the first to be badly afflicted. I had the first-aid kit with me, containing bandages, argerol solution, and boracic acid. I made an attempt to doctor George. At first he was grateful, but very soon he returned to his old game of preventing the Eskimos from letting me take their pictures.

The natives' condition did not improve as the summer advanced. Half of the forty men on the hunt were in absolute misery. Closing their eyes relieved them a little, but they had opportunity to do this only at rare intervals. One needs all his eyes on the ice. Sometimes when the torture was unbearable they would crawl into a tent and rest, with the heavy bandages over the inflamed organs, or they would roll their heads in skins to keep out the light. I tried to doctor them, but complete rest is essential if snow-blindness is to be cured, and this was impossible during the hunt.

Many times, when their eyes had been securely bandaged and dressed with antiseptic, the ice would break behind us. Then, forced to work in the searing sun, the natives groped and stumbled about like crazy puppets, breaking camp, loading the canoes, hauling heavy cargo over the ice.

There was no complaint. Their stoicism was superb. Here was the season that meant the

most to them; in fact starvation was in store for them if they failed to catch the whale. Overhead, the sunlight streamed gloriously after months of darkness — and they were blind!

But the whale must be caught, and without a murmur they dragged out a miserable, starving existence on the Arctic Ocean while they were barely able to see. And night brought no relief. For the sun shone then as it did during the day. The land of the midnight sun is a cruel joke to its people.

One particularly long haul must have been a living horror to the natives. We had no dogs and were making a desperate effort to return to safe ice. It was late in the season and the ice was breaking all around us. On several occasions we missed drowning by a few feet when the frozen ocean buckled up almost under us. Our last narrow escape warned us we must go far back. The eight natives and Jim and I harnessed ourselves to the canoe and pulled. Four of the natives were extremely ill from the constant torture of their burning eyes. We floundered on with the Eskimos falling every few feet. Aguvaluk suffered much. Once he fell heavily and for a moment was unable to rise. I hurried to him. He raised his face. The flesh surrounding his eyes was puffed grotesquely and had buried in the swelling his two eyes, fever-

ishly red, which gleamed through a veritable cascade of tears. The boy grinned at me! The next moment he was on his feet, hurrying to the assistance of another fallen native. The sun was dark but the Eskimo's heart remained light.

A day later we camped close to an open lead. Our men were feverish with excitement. The season was waning and a whale must be caught. The natives for hours had been prowling along the edge of the ice. Suddenly a huge, shining black head reared out of the ocean, spouting a jet of water and vapor.

"She blows! Muk-tuk! The whale!"

There was no time to waken Jim, who slept in the tent after hours of weariness. Silently as possible the umiak was boarded and shoved quietly into the water. The natives paddled carefully. Aguvaluk stood in the bow with poised harpoon as the canoe slid noiselessly toward the leviathan.

I had clambered into the boat and was grinding my camera crank, praying that the strange noise would not frighten the bow-head. Here was the big moment. I glanced anxiously at Aguvaluk. His eyes looked badly inflamed. I knew that he could scarcely see through his hot tears.

The harpooner's eyes closed and opened in a spasm of pain. His arm straightened out and

the weapon whirred through the air. It missed! The bow-head vanished. Black Sunlight had beaten us in our best chance!

It was a mortified umiak crew that paddled unwillingly back to camp. We knew what was in store for us. Jim had awakened, missed the umiak, and when we returned whaleless he pumped us with questions. Truth will out. So Jim learned that we had missed the big chance of the season.

I thought he would explode. He roared like a stricken bull. The natives cowered. Aguvaluk looked like a sick puppy. Then Jim launched into a colorful explanation of how he would have harpooned the mammal had he been with us. Next came a tirade directed at the Eskimos and aimed indirectly at me for failing to wake him. Not wake Jim Allen, master harpooner, when a whale was in sight! The idea, Jim swore, unthinkable, fiendish, inhuman!

When Jim got mad he made a good long job of it. He nursed his anger throughout the night. The natives kept at a distance and I kept quiet. Finally day came again and dawn seemed to bring fresh fuel for his rage and it looked as if we were doomed to some more brilliant pyrotechnics from the old whaler. Jim was out for blood! No doubt about that! An unexpected relief came in a visit from Dr. Greist. The mis-

sionary drove out by dog-sled from Point Barrow to give Holy Communion to the natives. Knowing the season had been particularly bad he did not want to call them in from their necessary labor for the service, so he went to them. After saying a few words of comfort to the luckless, disappointed and suffering whalers, he administered the Communion and left. The very simplicity of the service, conducted there on the Arctic ocean, was more impressive than I can possibly describe.

*An Eskimo  
Funeral*

Jim and I decided to go back to the village, for the open leads had closed in, we were only ten miles out on the ice, and it was an easy trail back. The natives, however, insisted on remaining.

We returned to tragedy. An hour or so after our arrival an Eskimo girl, about twelve years old, drove her dog-sleigh into Wainwright, from Attanuk, a trip of thirty miles. She was near collapse and told a terrible story. In Attanuk her mother and father lay dying. They had eaten bad walrus meat and were poisoned.

Jim's heart was touched. He commandeered the two fastest dogteams in Wainwright, selected two intelligent drivers, and set them on their way with succor. He gave them medicine, with

careful instructions how to administer it; and threatened the natives with all sorts of punishment if they failed to make every possible effort to beat Death to the igloo.

The natives sped away and arrived at Attanuk in record-breaking time. But it was not fast enough. When they reached the place they found both victims dead — the man had evidently just died. Because of the difficulty involved in dragging the two bodies through the narrow entrance tunnel, the natives cut a hole in the house-top and removed them that way.

They brought the bodies to Wainwright, where they were stripped of their old clothing. Jim gave them burial garments — suits of new underwear — a crude tenderness but a touching one. The bodies were laid in packing boxes and placed on a knoll, then snow walls were built around them, the whole being covered with a tent roof. Thus was formed a closed tomb.

The Eskimo girl, who was now fatherless and motherless, accepted the double death with the native's fortitude. She was taken care of by Wainwright tribesmen.

*Visitors  
from Afar*

The following notes from my diary will describe my meeting with Knud Rasmussen, the



famous Danish explorer, who with Meetik and Arnagaruk arrived in Wainwright from Greenland.

*“Thursday, June 5th:* Rose at nine A.M. Weather thirty-two above. Strong northeast wind and cloudy sky entirely overcast. Blizzardy. Jim and I will leave for whaling camp about noon. Later: The blizzard prevented us going out today. We were prepared to leave but gave it up about midnight.”

*“Friday, June 6th:* Knud Rasmussen, Danish explorer, and two Greenland Eskimos, a half white man, and a full blooded woman, arrived here at 3 A.M., having started from northwestern Greenland in 1921 for a circuit of exploration among Arctic tribes. Their expedition is known as the Fifth Thule expedition and is sponsored by the King of Denmark.

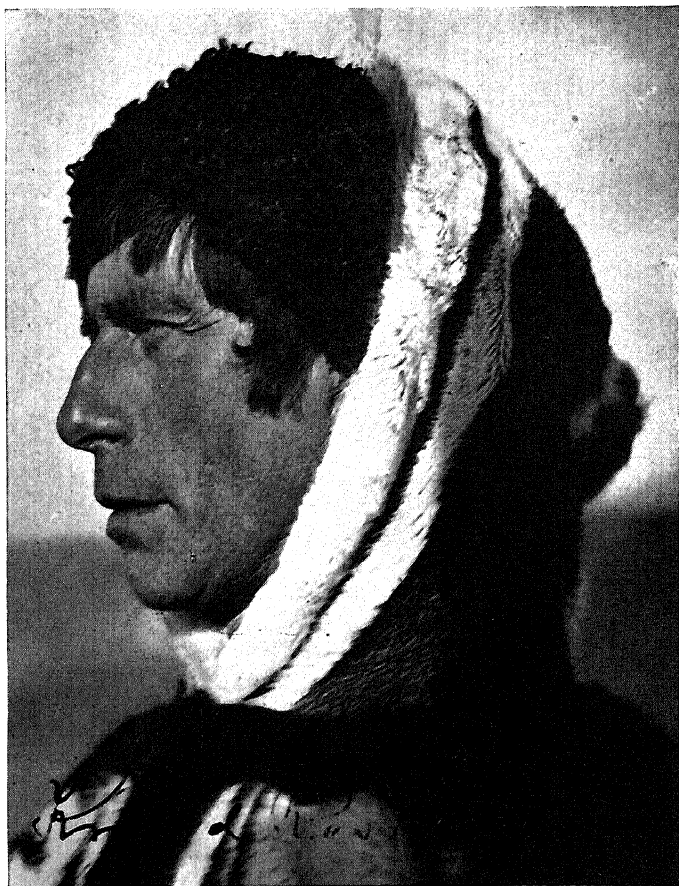
Rasmussen has the honor medal of the Royal Geographical Society of London, and is an honorary member of the Explorers' Club of New York. He is the same age as Stefansson, about five feet seven, slim, with medium complexion, greyish-blue eyes and a strong face.

Very interesting. He claims to have proof that originally the Eskimos inhabited the lake regions of Northern America between the 110th and 130th meridians, and were an inland people. They were continually at war against the Indians, however, and were finally driven northward to the coast. He believes that from there the migration began eastward to Greenland, and westward to Siberia, and backs up his opinion by the discovery of implements found on his expedition.

He says the implements are the same all along the line. And even the language is similar everywhere, with the exception of dialects. He cited an instance showing that whalebone implements are used in places to the eastward where whales never go, and that the whalebone must have come from the west coast in the neighborhood of Point Barrow.

Rasmussen was my guest at dinner and I found him very informative regarding Eskimo life and customs. He says primitive peoples exist at Victoria Land and in a few places inland from Hudson's Bay. Until this year many tribes still used primitive implements, but now a trading boat has worked its way in among them

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KNUD RASMUSSEN, THE DANISH EXPLORER



and established a post, and thus rifles and other modern weapons and implements have come into use. According to him the real Eskimo is a big, well-developed man, while the coast Eskimos, having a mixture of Indian, are more or less Mongolian in appearance. He is making a collection of Eskimo folk-lore tales.

The Danish explorer reported two Eskimos hung at Herschel Island in February. The father of one man committed suicide so as to meet him in the after-world. He shot himself but did not die, so stabbed himself in his breast. Still he did not die. He then took his knife and cut his throat."

### *An Arctic Tragedy*

Rasmussen told us further that Scarborough, the movie photographer of the *Duabury*, had perished at Flaxman Island during the winter, having been lost in a storm in trying to get back to his ship which was frozen in the ice at that time.

It appears that Scarborough and two others were returning with a load of fresh meat from the Canning River. They had travelled three days down river, all of it slow going on ac-

count of overflows on the ice and a heavy load. On Thanksgiving Day they camped about forty-five miles from the river mouth. Scarborough was anxious to get to the ship ahead of the others, and spoke of going straight to Flaxman Island the next day, claiming the distance to be less than another forty-five miles. He was positive that he could make it alone. His partners warned him not to attempt it alone, nor even to leave the sled party, as he was a newcomer in the country and some accident might befall him. They knew that he had got his feet wet every day before this in the overflows. On November the 27th the men left their tent very early in order to get the benefit of the morning moon. Scarborough had left on foot about a half-hour before his trail-mates with the sled. About three hours after breaking camp a wind sprang up which turned into a blinding blizzard and made travelling with the sled painfully slow, even though the wind was squarely at their backs. The men could not see where they were going and were compelled to follow the ice.

No one ever saw the cameraman again. Further search revealed that he had located a vacant cabin about nine miles from camp, where he had gone inside and tried to start a fire with some yarn he had evidently torn from his mitten strings. Probably because his hands were too

cold, or his matches wet, he failed to get the fire going.

Scarborough's tracks were followed straight out of the door of this cabin to an open lead, from where no more traces of him could be found.

*Back to the  
Hunt*

*June 7.* Rasmussen left for Icy Cape this morning at four o'clock. After the explorer's departure a stiff northeast wind blew, and in a short while the ice had begun to open again, so Jim and I set out, with one sled and a dog team, to rejoin the hunt.

The going was pretty hard. The sudden thaw had melted the upper layer of ice and it had frozen again into knife-like particles that cut the dogs' feet until they bled. The poor animals whimpered but kept on. We were forced to allow them a certain amount of rest, so it was some hours before we reached the scene of the base camp at which we had left the natives a week previously. There was not an Eskimo in sight! Sleds, tents and umiaks had vanished. On a snow bank lay the camera I had assigned to Aguvaluk's care. We could not find any sign to indicate which way the natives had gone.

Jim now gave a demonstration of anger that

made his previous demonstration, over our failure to harpoon "Leviathan," pale into insignificance. He raised his arms above his head and swore feloniously. The cold air fairly crackled as he unburdened the rarest profanities. His face grew red, then purple. Surely, I thought, the man will blow himself to pieces. But he had only started! All Eskimos that ever lived, were living, or would live, received a terrific broadside of absolutely classic vituperation.

My camera received the next cussing cannonade. The more he looked at it the more he swore. "Your camera did it! your camera did it!" He was fairly screaming now and pacing wildly back and forth. Presently he began to conceive the type of punishment he intended to mete out to the natives when he eventually found them.

This occupied several minutes, during which he revealed intended methods of torture far surpassing those of the Inquisition. Out of breath, he stopped and spluttered.

Then, without a word, he flung my camera on the dog-sled and was off at break-neck speed. I shouted to him to halt but the noise of his own mouth would have drowned artillery fire. I ran after him, but he had the dogs with him and in a few minutes I was outdistanced. Jim disappeared in the maze of ice. I hastily mounted



a hummock, looked about, finally located the elusive trader, and chased after him again. Again I was outdistanced and lost sight of him. I began to feel a bit nervous. I was in a devilish fix. Suppose, I thought, a lean, hungry polar bear should put in an appearance and insist on making my acquaintance!

I had lost all sense of direction and was floundering through snow and stumbling over ice. I clambered up a second hummock. No Jim. I ran and stumbled and ran. Hot, panting, out of breath, at last I managed to find him from the top of still another hummock. His big form was just a black spot on the ice.

Descending I made a final effort and I overtook my mentor, now turned tormentor. When I caught up he was with the natives. They had seen an early walrus and had started hot foot in pursuit of it, breaking camp. The Eskimos enjoyed a good laugh when I staggered in among them. All was amicable again, for Jim's delight at finding his wards had quieted him completely.

That night we pitched camp, but we did not sleep. There was another vigil for whales, although chances of a stray mammal appearing were now very limited.

*Through the Heart  
of the Floe*

*June 8.* Today we escaped death by about ten feet.

A storm had blown over and without warning the ice went crazy. With a terrific boom it buckled up behind us. All of us were thrown off our feet and our canoe was pitched into the air. The ice heaved and groaned. On all sides it swayed and cracked. We saw huge mounds of ice rip open and others fling themselves up into towering peaks.

It was like a frozen volcano in eruption. The solid ocean reeled. Great floes swirled furiously down the lane of open water and came together with a crash.

We ran, as best we could, for the canoe, being thrown several times on our faces as the ice buckled again. Some of the camp equipment was missing but we flung ourselves in the umiak and paddled. The ice we had just left would have swirled us farther along into the rebellious pack from where we never could have returned alive.

We were nearly thirty miles out to sea amid moving ice-floes and now we began a race for life and death. Chance lay against us. The current was sweeping north and we were racing

south. Jim Allen sat in the stern, steering with an oar, while Aguvaluk, as stroke, set a heart-breaking and back-breaking pace.

As we sped along I felt exhilarated by this fight against the elements. The water at the start was clear and dark. I could look over the umiak side and see, far below us in the cold depths, the body of the great ice cakes. Curiously serried by a strong under-current those vague blue masses wavered in strange light refractions as we glided far above them.

It began to storm. Snow and rain alternately drove in our faces. The rowing grew stiffer as the current flowed more swiftly. We dared not rest. On speed hung life.

Bellowing orders and booming encouragement, Jim sat behind me while I plunged my paddle in and out. I was weary. All my muscles ached. A conscious effort became necessary each time I dipped my paddle. The rain changed to sleet and clung to our faces.

For six long, cold, exhausting hours we worked. I became listless and paddled mechanically. Only Jim's deft steering saved us from destruction. The water was filled with large ice cakes that came swiftly down upon us in the narrow passages. Time after time, as I

glimpsed one of these bearing toward us, I thought "This is the end!" Surely it would crash into the umiak.

But Jim's eye was keen and his hands were sure. A hundred times during that trip he swerved the steering paddle and the boat turned ever so slightly, so that the ice rushed past us grazing our gunwhale.

On all sides ice overhung. Momentarily it might topple over, crash upon us. It swayed and shimmered in the sun and, to my tired eyes, writhed in fantastic forms. I was growing numb with fatigue.

My head drooped and my paddle dipped too slowly. But every time I felt my faculties drifting away I was aroused to further effort by Jim's great voice: "Remember you're a white man and you can't break down before the natives! Keep paddling, boy! It's life or death and it's up to you!"

Once or twice I slipped from my narrow seat and instantly felt Jim's arm about me. He would lift me again into position and, while I rested, paddle for me. I did not think the race would end in victory.

Our umiak was borne deep by reason of its heavy load. When any of us shifted position to relieve cramped legs the canoe shipped water. Then Jim threw himself again into the breach.

He did everything — he bailed, he steered, he paddled, he encouraged.

The last few miles are not clearly recorded in my mind.

Somehow, we managed to hold out and, finally in safer waters, we shelved the canoe on an ice-ledge and pitched camp. Exhausted as were the natives, they turned again to the chase — this time for seals.

For the events of the day told us that the whaling season was over. It had been unsuccessful although we had ventured farther out on the ice than any floe whaling expedition ever had done before, in Jim's memory. Our last chance had been wasted when the Black Sunlight played tricks on Aguvaluk's snow-blind eyes as he stood with harpoon poised and a whale in sight.

### *Relaxing with Nature*

Jim was downcast. Two natives had already died from lack of proper food, and the future looked like another starvation period. In face of these circumstances the trader determined to stay out and try the sealing. I hated to leave him in such sore mood, but my work on the ice was done, so with a four-dogteam and a rickety sled I made the return to Wainwright. I was dead

tired and intended to go directly to my "billet" and sleep. But at the outskirts of the village I came upon a group of children at play, and stopped to watch them.

Eskimos tend to be what English schoolboys call "merry and bright." Neither the rigors of the climate nor the frequent food crises can quench their natural buoyancy. Even the adults are great practical jokers. They are constantly telling funny stories and making jests in colloquial language freely besprinkled with slang. And in all this their juniors run them a close second. The summer season is a perpetual holiday to the children, who, despite the neighboring Post have far from given up their primitive disregard of time. So long as the sun shines and their spirit holds out, their play continues, one game merging into another while the fun waxes fast and furious. There is no bed-time nor dusk to interfere. Occasionally the ebullient spirit of youth carries them straight through twenty-four or even forty-eight hours of unbroken activity.

Their games are as varied as those invented by our own youngsters. When the tundra blooms they chase the dogs, pick flowers, weave wreaths, and play ball. It was still too early in the year for such pleasures, though. The group I met were amusing themselves by sliding down tall

drifts, their sleds being the same natural sort used by children in civilized lands when they slide down banisters! Their display of energy made me feel an aged wreck, and I was more than ever anxious to reach home, and my comfortable spring cot.

The next day I felt much refreshed and went to work obtaining pictures of bird-life. The birds still were streaming north. Their flight always fascinated me and I never tired of watching them and puzzling about their destination.

“Is this constant migration mere instinct, or does ‘the lure of the North’ get them, too?” I asked myself. “And has it got me? Once well out of the Arctic, shall I ever return?”

Three months earlier I would have given a cold negative to such a question. But now I believed the country had woven its magic around me. Its marvellous air, its genial inhabitants, the simplicity of the life, the freedom, the excellent sport — these things are difficult to obtain in equal measure elsewhere. These are the charms that draw one back. Some day, I felt sure, I would be setting my face Northward again, with a quickened pulse and that subconscious smile that lightens our thoughts of reunion with distant companions and homely enjoyable scenes. I was now one of that limited, but ever growing brotherhood, who, by contact with the

land and its people, have obtained the freedom of the "Friendly Arctic."

Soon after this I left Wainwright for Maudheim where Captain Amundsen's cabin is situated. Maudheim means "Home of the Maud" and refers to his ship *Maud* which was then in the Polar Sea. Amundsen was scheduled to return shortly, and I wanted to be in Maudheim when he arrived from Nome to start for Spitzbergen on his trans-Arctic flight.

I took Tukuluk along with me. He had promised to show me how to use the bow and arrow in bird hunting. And on the hike he inducted me into bird lore for he was a rude but informative ornithologist. When we arrived at the Captain's cabin, I straightened it and made things comfortable against his return, wrote up my diary, and loafed the rest of the time, except that I went out daily to film birds. Tukuluk and I made a little tour in the vicinity of the cabin and the inlet, locating several snipe nests near by. The snipe, with grass, arranges her nest in bower form. There were two to four eggs in each little nursery. We found an eider duck's nest with only four eggs as yet, and then the nest of a snow-bunting. It was under a piece of sod and contained four eggs. I turned back the sod and exposed the interior to the sunlight so I could film it. Then Tukuluk and I retired a few feet. Here a little drama was enacted.



As we expected, the mother bird soon came into sight. A few feet away from her nest she sensed, or saw, that it was not as she had left it. She flew about, peeking furtively at her home, hovering near but not going to it, as if afraid to face the change immediately. All of a sudden she made up her mind and flew to her nursery. Dismayed at finding it had been tampered with she hopped this way and that in consternation. For a while the little creature stood still. Whatever else she did or did not think, she evidently reached the conclusion that the sensible thing to do was to repair the damage. So she gathered bits of moss, tundra grass, and feathers in her beak, and began rebuilding the ravaged home.

Tukaluk and I were not the only witnesses of her plight and efforts. A lemming, a small tailless mouse, came out of a hole near by and conducted a neighborly inspection. The animal seemed anxious and hurt over our home-wrecking, and nervously moved in sympathy as he noted the snow-bunting's consternation. When the repairs were completed the lemming looked satisfied and scuttled away.

*Waiting for  
Captain Amundsen*

*June 21.* This is the day that Captain Amundsen was to come riding out of the sky to us. At two o'clock in the morning I prepared a

breakfast, then went outside, and eagerly scanned the heavens. They were cloudless and bright save when masses of birds passed before the sun. But there was no sign of a motor-bird.

Disappointed, at four o'clock I turned in, leaving Tukuluk to watch for the white man on the "big, roaring bird." He too was disappointed.

We watched all of the next day, Tukuluk relieving its monotony by an archery exhibition. He walked out from the cabin a short distance to where pools of melting ice gleamed. Here, occasionally, duck would fly down and come to rest. Warning me to be very quiet, the native took a lengthy, fine sight with his primitive weapon, and sent the arrow skimming swiftly towards the pool. Alarmed by the bow twang the ducks fluttered up. One of them was dilatory. The arrow found its mark and the bird fell back into the water.

I thought the arrow would have pierced its victim, but the native had used a blunt ivory arrow head. The bird was only stunned or paralyzed. Picking it up, Tukuluk pulled out one of its big feathers, and, with the long sharp quill, pierced the creature's heart. In a moment it was dead.

The following day, despairing of ever seeing Captain Amundsen and pondering on his ab-

sence, I dispatched my native companion back to Wainwright for more supplies, to replenish some of the Maudheim provisions which I had used.

Before starting to Amundsen's cabin I had been rash enough to tell the Eskimos that the Captain whom they knew was coming out of the sky to greet them. Naturally they had received this marvellous news with great excitement.

On my return to Wainwright the natives swarmed around me asking why Amundsen had not returned. I very soon realized that I had acquired a distinguished reputation as a liar. All my efforts to explain proved futile. Telling them that the Captain had probably met with unavoidable accident or delay was of no avail. I had given my word that he was to appear on a certain day. He had not appeared. Therefore, I was a liar!

Thank Goodness, the natives had very little time to think about my prevarications, for it was now the walrus season.

If the Spirits were good humored, the Eskimos said, there would be much meat after all.

### *The Walrus Hunt*

The walrus hunt proved a milder matter in every way than whale hunting. In the first

place the ice was rapidly breaking up and the whole business could be conducted in the umiaks. Paddling about among the floes seemed a joy-ride compared to dragging a sled and heavily-loaded umiak across jig-saw ice ridges. The hunt took on the form of a sporting event, and our success helped to sustain this view of it.

The very first day a sudden commotion in the canoe heralded walrus. Quite a distance away on a floe a herd of the animals were basking in the sun. We rapidly drew up to them and shelved the canoe, walking to the herd from the rear. The walrus, unlike the whale, does not hear very well and it is possible to get very close before the beast senses your presence.

There were perhaps a hundred animals in this herd. Just as we got up to them they became alarmed. With great awkward movements of their bodies, and with much grunting, the ponderous beasts waddled clumsily to the edge of the ice, their flippers slapping and waving.

With loud splashes they threw themselves into the sea, rolling over and over. Our harpooners and riflemen were fully alert and several of the walrus fell.

When we were afloat again a wound-maddened bull charged toward our canoe. Tukuluk let fly at him; wounded a second time he dived beneath the water. We watched anxiously. An instant

later, with long, dangerous tusks gleaming, the old fellow popped up close to the umiak. Enraged, unmindful of harpoons or rifle shots, he charged us full tilt. The canoe swerved quickly, but the walrus was as quick. His tusks ripped through the skin boat.

Water rushed in, such a geyser as had foundered my motor launch in Juneau harbor. I was afraid, and called to Tukuluk, but he said there was no danger of sinking, despite our heavy load of meat. We paddled to the floe and there disembarked. The native cut pieces of skin from his boot and sewed it over the rent left by the tusks. When we shoved off again the canoe was perfectly sea-worthy.

After several days of this we returned to Wainwright. A wild shout went up when we came in. We had killed so many walrus that we could not carry all of them in the five canoes and were compelled to leave much meat behind on the ice.

All the meat brought back was dumped in a big pile, and the natives divided it share and share alike. They sliced up the animals with harpoon hooks, and saw that each man got as much as his neighbor.

*“ Umiakpuk ”  
comes to take  
me Home*

The season waxed to full summer and ships came through from “ outside.” The *Boxer* was expected daily. Her advent would be the signal for my departure.

I was sorry to think of going, and all at Wainwright seemed to share my feeling. Jim and I made the most of the time left to us by indulging in long talks.

One night — a night of honey-golden daylight, when we had been awake for hours, talking — a knock at the door startled us. It opened and Segevan stood on the threshold announcing:

“ Ivuk ” (walrus). “ Plenty meat.” He told us that the whole village was out on the ice again, ready for a hunt, so we joined them.

In honor of what would probably be my final trip the Eskimos elected me stroke in the umiak. The weather was clear at starting, but soon a fog settled, which did not improve hunting conditions. After miles of weary travel near the ice pack, suddenly we heard the chug-chug of a propeller. “ Umiakpuk ” ! (big ships) the natives cried, and my heart leaped, for I knew it must be “ my ” ship.

Momentarily the fog paled, disclosing two

masts and a hull — the *Boxer* for certain! The natives acted like a lot of school-boys on a holiday, but they were less excited than I was.

We had a choice of going on with the hunt, or of lying by, near the ship's path, so that I could meet my friends. The decision rested with our crew. They held a parley and decided the walrus could wait.

The fog obligingly lifted and the *Boxer*, seeing us, slowed up. Lopp himself threw a rope.

“Hello, Tom! Hello Frank!”

“Hello, Earl!”

The banality of our words covered our deep emotion.

“Hang on until we anchor,” somebody called. The Eskimos clutched the rope-end, and then began the fastest umiak ride on record. We ripped along behind the ship at about ten knots. Finally the *Boxer* tied up to an ice-cake and we boarded her.

We learned that the *Lady Kindersley*, a ship that had gone east earlier in the season, was caught in the ice off Tangent Point. The men were preparing to leave the ship. They had already built temporary canoes, using canvas as covering. They expected to travel twenty-five miles over the ice to the Point, and the *Boxer* had been asked to stand by for further orders in case they needed help.

Although this news was distressing, I felt glad, for it meant a few more hours, perhaps days, with my northern friends.

The *Boxer* received no further communication until the next morning, when she started north. On this venture we were nearly caught in the ice at Sea-Horse Islands, and Captain Whitlam thought it wiser to return.

Lopp now suggested that he and I remain ashore. We took off sufficient equipment to tide us over in case of accident, and made ourselves comfortable. We were anxious for a visit together but found no time, for Tom was being entertained by the natives, and I prolonged my farewell with Jim.

We were prepared to leave any minute, but, during the night the *Boxer* received distress signals, and went off without us. We remained on the beach for eight days not knowing what had happened, and finally Jim and I returned to Wainwright.

At eleven o'clock one night, late in August, Elinor, Jim's wife, rushed in calling: "Umiak-puk! Umiakpuk!" and I knew it was time for me to go.

A few minutes later we were all astonished to see Charlie Brower and Captain Joe Bernard, of the *Teddy Bear*, walk in. Behind them waltzed the captain and the chief engineer of the *Arctic*, Brower's ship.



A riotous, friendly welcome greeted the newcomers, and when things had sobered a little we heard how the *Arctic* had been crushed in the ice. The *Lady Kindersley*, too, was lost, but all her men saved. The *Boxer* was behind the Point in safety but could not get out, the chances were she would not be able to get out until the ice broke up next year. When she sailed she would take the crew of the *Lady Kindersley*.

The *Teddy Bear* herself, after leaving Barrow with the officers of the *Arctic*, had been frozen in the ice for eight days.

Imagine my feelings during the recounting of all these disasters! Loath as I might be to leave my native friends, the prospect of a second winter spent at Wainwright was appalling. My only chance of getting back to civilization lay with the *Teddy Bear*, and she had already taken aboard many passengers. With sinking heart I put the question, was there room for me?

Misery loves company. I was gladly welcomed by one and all of the shipwrecked mariners, and we proceeded on board.

*"Say 'Au revoir'  
but not 'Goodbye.'"*

*August 24, 1924.* I was leaving. As I leaned on the rail of the little trading vessel, looking back at Wainwright Village, I medi-

tated on the North and its outstanding feature — ice.

During the whaling season I had come to hate the ice. At first it had fascinated me, but after being frozen and undergoing all the difficulties of hunting on the pack, I detested it. To me, then, ice seemed a needlessly cruel visitation.

By and by, as day lengthened and the sun hurled its rays endlessly upon us; while we endured week after week of burning heat and blinding glitter, urged on to continuous restless effort by the everlasting daylight, I realized that ice and cold were blessings in disguise. Neither man nor beast could survive the Arctic's more than tropic sun-heat were it not for icy backgrounds. Without the frost lying always a few inches underground, without the thaw water trickling persistently and revivingly as spring-time liberates it, the vegetation in this Northland would sear and wither under the amazingly concentrated warmth of its midnight sun beating down, beating down, through weeks of summer.

But no sooner was I reconciled to the ice than it made its power felt in vaster ways. The picture of those ships, crushed to splinters as if by a gigantic closing hand, and sucked under, their crews fleeing for safety! That other little ship — my friend the *Boxer* — “frozen in” for the



THE MIDNIGHT SUN



long night! How it balked affection! Yet men can love the Arctic — and do love her.

My own heart was heavy with departure. I had often imagined the moment of leave-taking. When lonely and suffering from cold I had thought I would be overjoyed at sailing away to the pleasant comfort of life “outside.” In reality I found myself unhappy, and the cause for depression was not merely that I had learned to love my Eskimo companions. There was another reason.

As the *Teddy Bear* took me farther and farther away from Wainwright the words of Segevan, the ancient and wise one, drifted through my brain. I had once asked the seer why he and his people did not leave the frozen, stern North and seek a smiling land, where life was kinder. And he had answered:

“All things start here. Here they finish.”

Perhaps he is right. Some day I am going back.

END











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